■ METRO / A23

168 Mall in Binondo raided over tenants' failure to show receipts

■ LIFESTYLE / E1

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■ WORLD / A25

Protests prompt Thaksin to ponder retirement soon

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

Blame it on bossa nova: Sergio Mendes here for 1-night gig, explains stunning 5-decade career

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, March 17, 2006 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 99 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Miriam to AFP: You're like worms, stay in your holes

BULATE LANG PALA SILA?!

By Philip C. Tubeza

MUCH MAY BE MADE OF the Armed Forces' touted neutral stance, but not everyone in the administration fold is sold on the idea that it is the military "holding the nation together."

Administration Sen.

MIRIAM/ A6

Rogues' gallery hit: Violation of presumption of innocence

By Armand N. Nocum

PUTTING UP A "ROGUES' GALLERY" OF purported coup plotters will violate the right to privacy and impose a "chilling effect" on all critics of the government, constitutionalist Fr. Joaquin Bernas and the Concerned Lawyers for Civil Liberties (CLCL) said yesterday.

The CLCL also said the planned rogues'

ROGUES/ A8

US tells Erap, JV, Ping: We bugged you

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE UNITED STATES, SMARTING from an unprecedented spying scandal in the White House allegedly involving Filipino-American Leandro Aragoncillo, had bugged former President Joseph Estrada and his son, Mayor Joseph Victor (JV) Ejercito of San Juan, official sources said.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the case, said Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson had also been subjected to wiretapping.

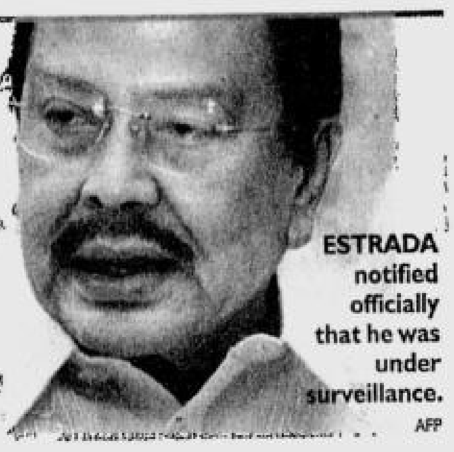
The US Embassy sent a diplomatic note dated Feb. 1 to the Department of Foreign Affairs, transmitting "legal Notices of Interception of wire and/or electronic communications for Joseph Estrada and JV Ejercito."

"The embassy requests assistance from the (DFA) in serving the notices on these individuals. The embassy also requests confirmation that the Department has been able to do this," the note said.

A copy of the note was given to the INQUIRER by one official source. The INQUIRER was allowed to read the legal notices dated Dec. 16, 2005. The sources said the Department of Justice served the notices to the parties three weeks ago.

The sources said that the notices were intended to alert the recipients that they could be implicated in the spying controversy and could be brought to the United

US TELLS/ A4



ESTRADA notified officially that he was under surveillance. AFP

65% want Arroyo out

Pulse Asia poll says 6% back coup d'etat

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

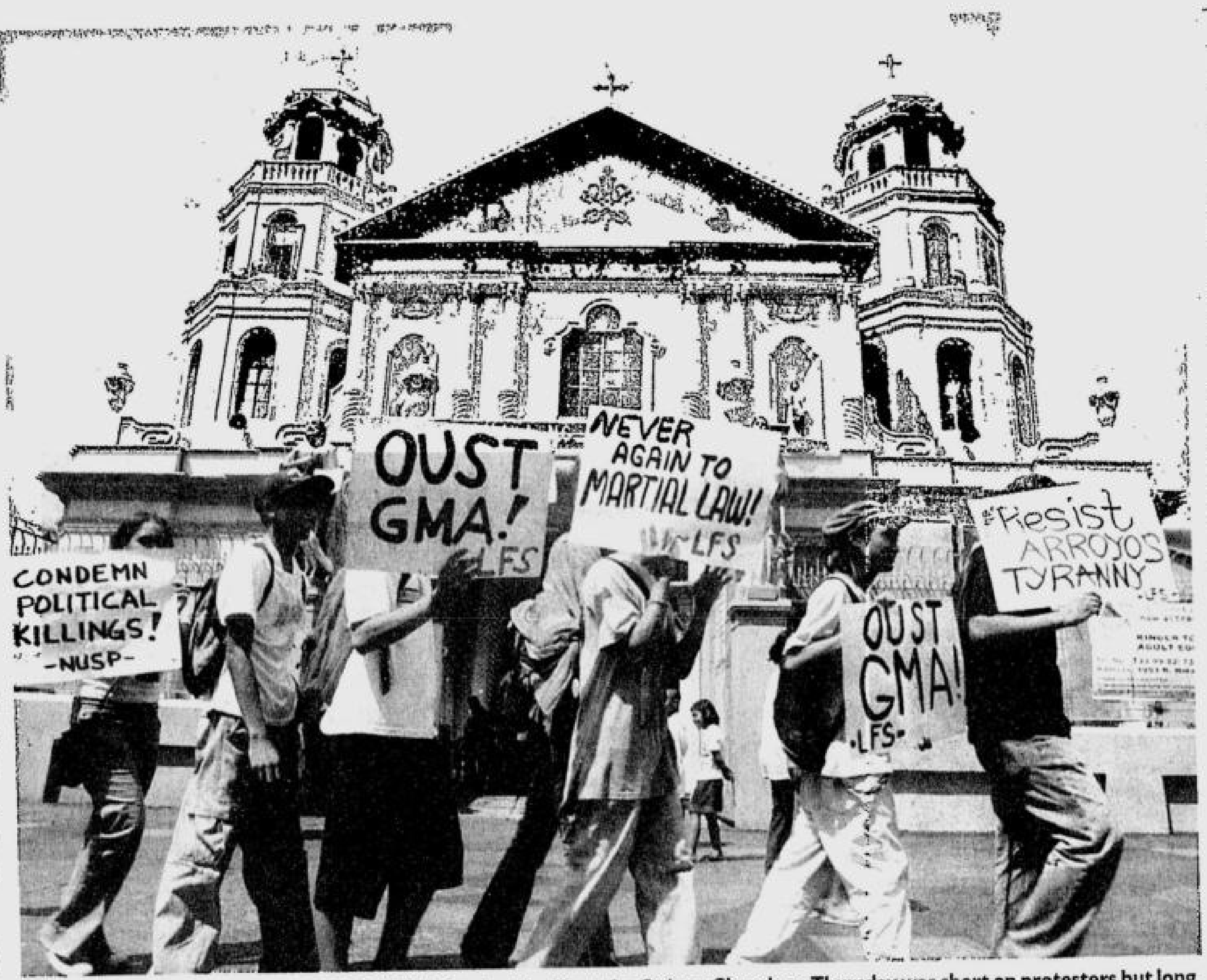
UP TO 65 PERCENT OF Filipinos believe that the resignation or removal of President Macapagal-Arroyo from office is the best way to solve the country's political crisis although they have not formed a consensus on how her successor should be chosen, according to the latest nationwide survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

In its analysis of the survey, conducted from Feb. 18 to March 4 this year, Pulse Asia said Ms Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency may have influenced the desire of more Filipinos to see her step down.

"The proportion who chose the resignation option is larger among those who were interviewed after the declaration of a state of emergency (61 percent) than among those who were interviewed prior to 24 February 2006 (53 percent)," said Pulse Asia. Only a quarter of the 1,200 interviews were made after Proclamation No. 1017 was issued on Feb. 24.

The survey had a margin of error of 3 percentage points either way at the 95 percent confidence level.

65% WANT/ A4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NEVER AGAIN TO MARTIAL LAW! LFS
Resist ARROYO'S TYRANNY
OUST GMA! LFS

SCHOOLYEAR ENDS BUT NOT PROTESTS. Students' rally at the Quiapo Church on Thursday was short on protesters but long on meaning as they claim it signals the start of the youth's so-called "Summer Strike" against President Arroyo. REUTERS

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

NO. 1 WELL-WISHER: President Arroyo poses with the priests and staff of the Diocese of Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya headed by Bishop Ramon Villena (left) who turns 67 on Thursday. The known antimining advocate Villena is the third bishop Ms Arroyo met in seven days.

For ₱5M, call PNP 117 with info on Gringo

By Tarra V. Quismundo, Luige A. del Puerto and Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE YESTERDAY SET AT P5 MILLION THE bounty for former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, who was charged with coup d'etat on Feb. 24, the day President Macapagal-Arroyo placed the country under a state of emergency in the wake of an alleged coup.

The case against Honasan, one of those linked to a rightist and leftist plot to overthrow Ms Arroyo last month, was in connection with the takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel in Makati City by the Magdalo group of soldiers in 2003.

Police placed a total bounty of P3 million on the heads of Honasan's six alleged co-conspirators.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao told reporters that posters with pictures of the seven fugitives led by Honasan would be placed

FOR P5-M/ A8

Pa's advice to son: JPE tells Honasan not to surrender

By Philip C. Tubeza

LIKENING FORMER SEN. GREGORIO "Gringo" Honasan to his own son, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday said he would not advise Honasan to surrender to police authorities.

Enrile said he doubted that the government case of coup d'etat against Honasan would hold water, adding that he would have known if the cashiered Army colonel was planning to violently overthrow the government.

"If I were not in the Senate, I would love to handle the case and make mincemeat of the case of anyone against these people," he added.

Enrile said he was willing to act as an intermediary but he discouraged the administration from taking drastic steps against Honasan as this could lead to a repeat of the coup-ridden years of the Aquino administration.

"I will not convince him to surrender," Enrile said, in reply to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor's appeal for him to urge Honasan to surrender.

Honasan was Enrile's longtime military aide when Enrile was defense minister during the Marcos regime. Both of them were involved in a failed coup against Marcos that

PA'S ADVICE/ A8

Tough to be a Rosales after a Sin

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S TOUGH BEING GAUDENCIO Cardinal Rosales.

Often measured against the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, the low-key archbishop of the powerful Metropolitan See of Manila isn't exactly staring at calm seas, especially now that he's got the red hat.

Two days before leaving for Rome for his induction into the College of Cardinals, the 73-year-old cardinal made clear no changes were forthcoming, if only to satisfy a public that can't seem to get enough of Cardinal Sin, his popular and outspoken

TOUGH/ A6

Bernas urges SC to speed up 1017 ruling

By Armand N. Nocum

A ROMAN CATHOLIC EXPERT ON CONstitutional law yesterday urged the Supreme Court to speed up the resolution of cases questioning the legality of President Macapagal-Arroyo's proclamation of a state of national emergency and other controversial orders, saying the delay was legitimizing the allegedly repressive and questionable actions of her administration.

Fr. Joaquin Bernas told a news conference he was concerned that the delay in the court's ruling on these issues could lead to a situation similar to martial law under the deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos where the high court "legitimated actions that were later disowned by the 1987 Constitution."

Thus, the only way for the court to stop making itself a legitimizer of allegedly repressive laws would be for it to immediately rule on cases involving the suppres-

BERNAS/ A10

Pasig businessman killed in front of wife; she tags Chavit

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.
Metro
and Leoncio Balbin Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BUSINESSMAN LEONARDO UMALE HAD just gotten off his white Mercedes Benz and was about to enter his eight-story Pearl Plaza Building at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City shortly before noon yesterday. He never made it inside.

In front of his wife and in the full view of students eating in restaurants on the ground and upper floors of the building on Pearl Drive, one of at least four men shot Umale at close range, hitting him four times in the nape and head.

His building electrician, Ernesto Lanton, also sustained a gunshot wound in his belly. He was still being operated on as of press time.

Hours after Umale was killed, his wife Clarissa emerged from the emergency room of The Medical City and yelled at two reporters waiting outside.

"You should interview Chavit Singson," she said in Filipino, repeating it about three times, while clutching a brown rosary. Her green blouse and cream pants were splattered with the dried blood of her husband. She was referring to Ilocos Sur

PASIG/ A10

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Southern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/03/16/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

GMA foes to revive impeachment

By Christine O. Avendaño

OPPOSITION LEADERS YESTERDAY EXpressed confidence they would have enough witnesses, evidence and support from their fellow lawmakers to initiate a new impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and Rep. Gilbert Remulla told reporters the case would be filed in July with at least the 79 supporters needed to endorse it and send it to the Senate for trial. The House is dominated by Ms Arroyo's allies.

"We are preparing a second impeachment complaint to be filed in the third or last week of July," Escudero said.

He said the 51 lawmakers who supported the impeachment bid that failed last year would be joined by members of the majority who had become disgruntled with the President over her recent declaration of a state of national emergency.

Hopeful

"We are hopeful that those who are on the brink or in the middle of the road, so to speak, will be joining the minority in the next couple of days or weeks," he said.

The opposition last year failed to muster the required one-third vote of the 236-seat House to impeach the President, who has continued to deny allegations she had cheated in the 2004 election.

Ms Arroyo declared a state of national emergency on Feb. 24 to thwart what she claimed was a broad conspiracy among the communists, rebel military officers and civil society groups to topple her.

New warning

Yesterday, she warned politicians aligning themselves with the communists that, in the end, it would be the people who would suffer if they succeeded in unseating her.

Speaking at the gathering of American business chambers in the Asia-Pacific region, Ms Arroyo said her economic reforms had been "embraced" in the global marketplace and the "recent attempts at political instability had been discounted."

"Our market is up – the stock market, bond market, peso – but woe to the backward-looking political opportunists who stoop to unholy alliances with the apostles of an ideology already discredited by the world," the President said.

"To them, my message is: The markets will punish our nation and our people if we stray from constitutional democracy."

In her speech, the President told the American businessmen of her bid to reform the country's system of government "to make our democracy move faster."

"Modern economies are outstripping our political system and we are changing it by constitutional reform," she said.

"I am committed to microfinance and the power of entrepreneurs, not to micromanagement and state-run enterprises. I want to create engineers, not sloganeers. I want to create good jobs, not mindless mobs," she said.

The President said the country's investment in high speed Internet and fire optic cables had led to an "explosion of the outsourcing industry."

She said 120,000 jobs at good wages had been created in the call centers and outsourcing businesses "that didn't exist just five years ago." She called this a "revolution."

Ms Arroyo vowed to the American businessmen that her administration would do its part "to make the Philippines a business-friendly place to live, work and invest [in]."

"Government must be a partner to ensure domestic tranquility and fairness to the people, not to dictate, or interfere with the marketplace. And that is the philosophy of our administration," she said. *With AP, AFP reports*

Party-list solons to ask SC to stop DOJ probe

By Michael Lim Ubac

WITH TIME RUNNING OUT, the Batasan 6 yesterday decided it would petition the Supreme Court to stop the Department of Justice from continuing to hear the rebellion charges filed against them for allegedly conspiring to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo last month.

The six party-list congressmen will file with the high court next week a petition for certiorari and a temporary restraining order against the DOJ.

"Yes, anywhere (but the DOJ)," said lawyer Romeo Capulong, when asked at a press conference at the House of Representatives where he would like his clients to be investigated.

"We've completely lost trust in the DOJ under [Secretary Raul] Gonzalez. We want someone [with] whom we can have a level of trust," he said.

Capulong is the lawyer for party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Rafael Mariano, Liza Maza, Teodoro Casiño, Joel Virador and Crispin Beltran, and six suspected communist rebels named in the rebellion case at the DOJ.

Last Monday, the DOJ ordered the Batasan 6 to submit their counter-affidavits within a "non-extendable period" of 10 days after which their case would be deemed submitted for resolution.

In Capulong's view, the DOJ should inhibit itself from investigating the rebellion charges for its "lack of impartiality, extreme bias and prejudice."

He also threatened to seek the disbarment of the justice secretary for continuing to "violate the rights of my clients."

"What we're up against is a government without respect for the rule of law – (public officials) placing the law in their own hands and making unilateral decisions," Capulong said.

He said the DOJ was following a Malacañang "script," citing the case of Beltran who was investigated, charged and brought to court all in one day.

Of the 47 affidavits submitted to the Makati Regional Trial Court to support the rebellion charges against Beltran, 44 had no "probative value," Capulong said.

"In all my 50 years (of practicing law), this is the most complicated case in the history of the DOJ," said Capulong, who had served as a justice in the international human rights tribunal in the International Court of Justice.

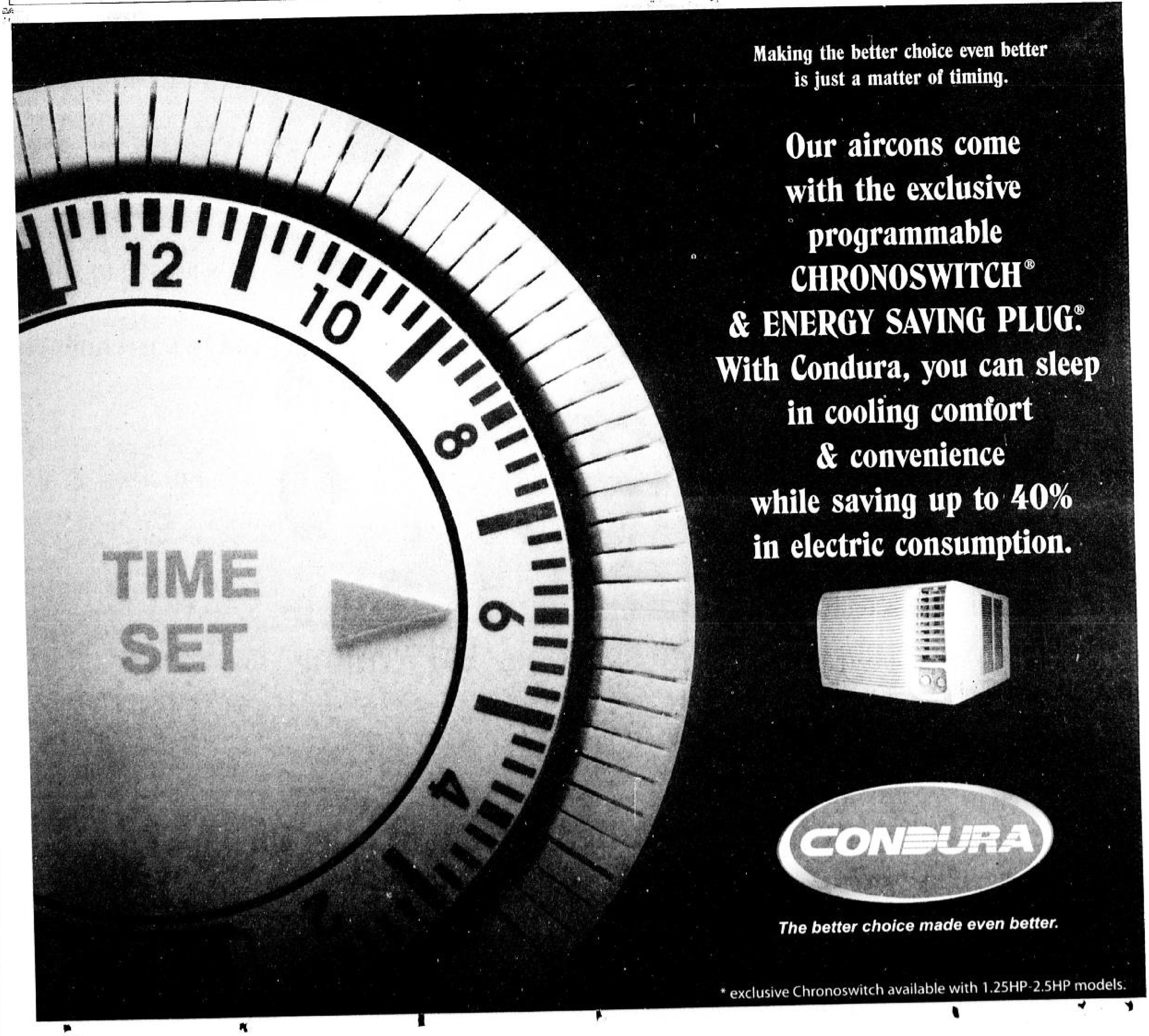
Under Rule 112 of the Revised Rules on Criminal Procedures, the Metropolitan Trial Courts (MTC), public prosecutors and the Sandiganbayan can conduct preliminary investigations in lieu of DOJ prosecutors.

The Sandiganbayan, though, through the Ombudsman can only investigate graft, not rebellion, charges.

"We will avail of the limited space," said Capulong, when asked what he would do if the DOJ refused to inhibit itself from the proceedings.

His clients were willing to travel anywhere to attend hearings should the Supreme Court decide that the charges should be heard by an MTC, he added.

"First things first," said Maza, who said the Batasan 6 had decided to utilize all the legal defenses available to "every Filipino" in their effort to disprove the charges.



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Time correspondent stands by story on foiled coup attempt

COJUANGCO

TIME MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT Nelly Sindayen has finally broken her silence, issuing a statement affirming the veracity of her article implicating Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, and Pastor Saycon, secretary general of the Council on Philippine Affairs, in a foiled coup attempt last month.

"Please note that I stand by the article and have nothing further to add," Sindayen said in a letter to the National Bureau of Investigation.

The article, titled "Emergency Rules," appeared in the Time Asia edition of Feb. 26.

Reynaldo Esmeralda, chief of the NBI Special Task Force, said Sindayen's letter would be enough basis for the bureau to issue a subpoena against Saycon, who declined earlier summons to appear at the NBI.

"We are not satisfied with (Saycon's) letter explaining the circumstances surrounding the Feb. 23 meeting at Cojuangco's house," Esmeralda said.

He said Saycon has to go to the NBI to answer "clarificatory questions" concerning his alleged role in the foiled coup plot, as Sindayen had reported.

With the Sindayen letter, the NBI can now also go after the other personalities mentioned in the Time article, said Esmeralda.

"The names of the personalities included in the meeting would hopefully be revealed when Mr. Saycon responds to our subpoena," he said.

"If we gather enough evidence proving that these people were involved in the coup plot, we will file the appropriate charges against them," he added.

Esmeralda said that if Sindayen or her lawyers agree, the Time correspondent could swear to and sign her name to the Time article, which would turn it into a public document.

In the Time article, Sindayen reported having been invited to witness a meeting on Feb. 23 at the Makati home of Cojuangco "where a possible plan for a withdrawal of support from President Macapagal-Arroyo was being discussed."

Sindayen said the meeting was attended by more than a dozen politicians and businesspeople, including Pasig Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr., Cojuangco's son-in-law, and Ding Tanjuatco, a former congressman and cousin of Cojuangco.

Sindayen also reported that Saycon spoke on the phone to a person he identified as an American official in Washington who supposedly assured the group of US support, and a man whom he addressed as "Delta," later identified as Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

Saycon allegedly said that a military contingent was to march to the Edsa Shrine on Feb. 24, where they would be met by a group of Catholic bishops and a Marine general who would read a statement withdrawing support from Ms Arroyo, according to the Time magazine article.

Lim was dismissed as commander of the First Scout Ranger regiment and arrested on Feb. 23 after the Armed Forces leadership learned of his plan to march with anti-Arroyo protesters. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

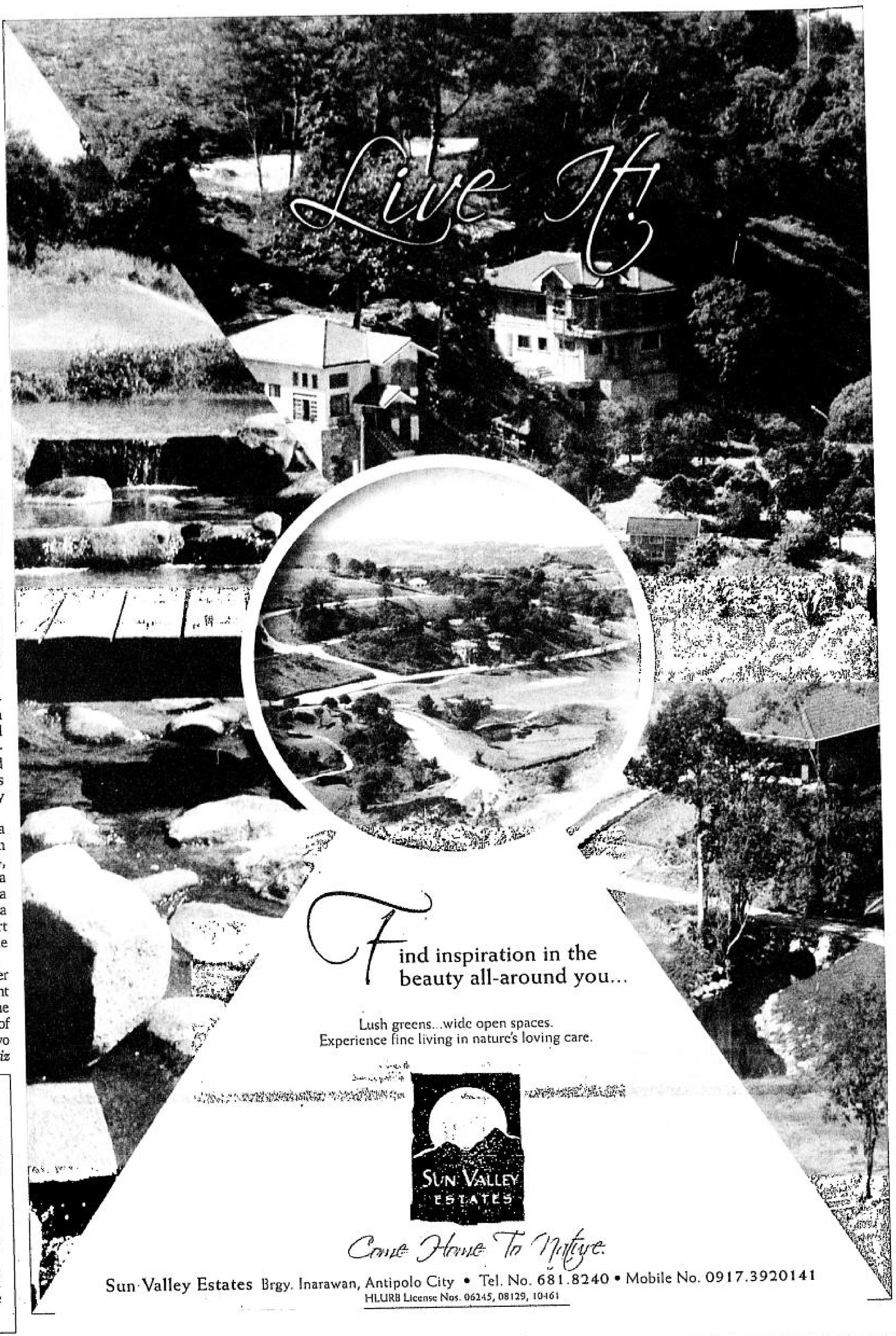
Correction

IN THE MARCH 16 ISSUE, the editorial on Page A10—"Subversion"—misstated that a lawyer for the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism is a sister of PCIJ executive director Sheila Coronel. Lawyer Sandra Marie Olaso Coronel is married to a distant cousin of journalist Sheila Coronel.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.



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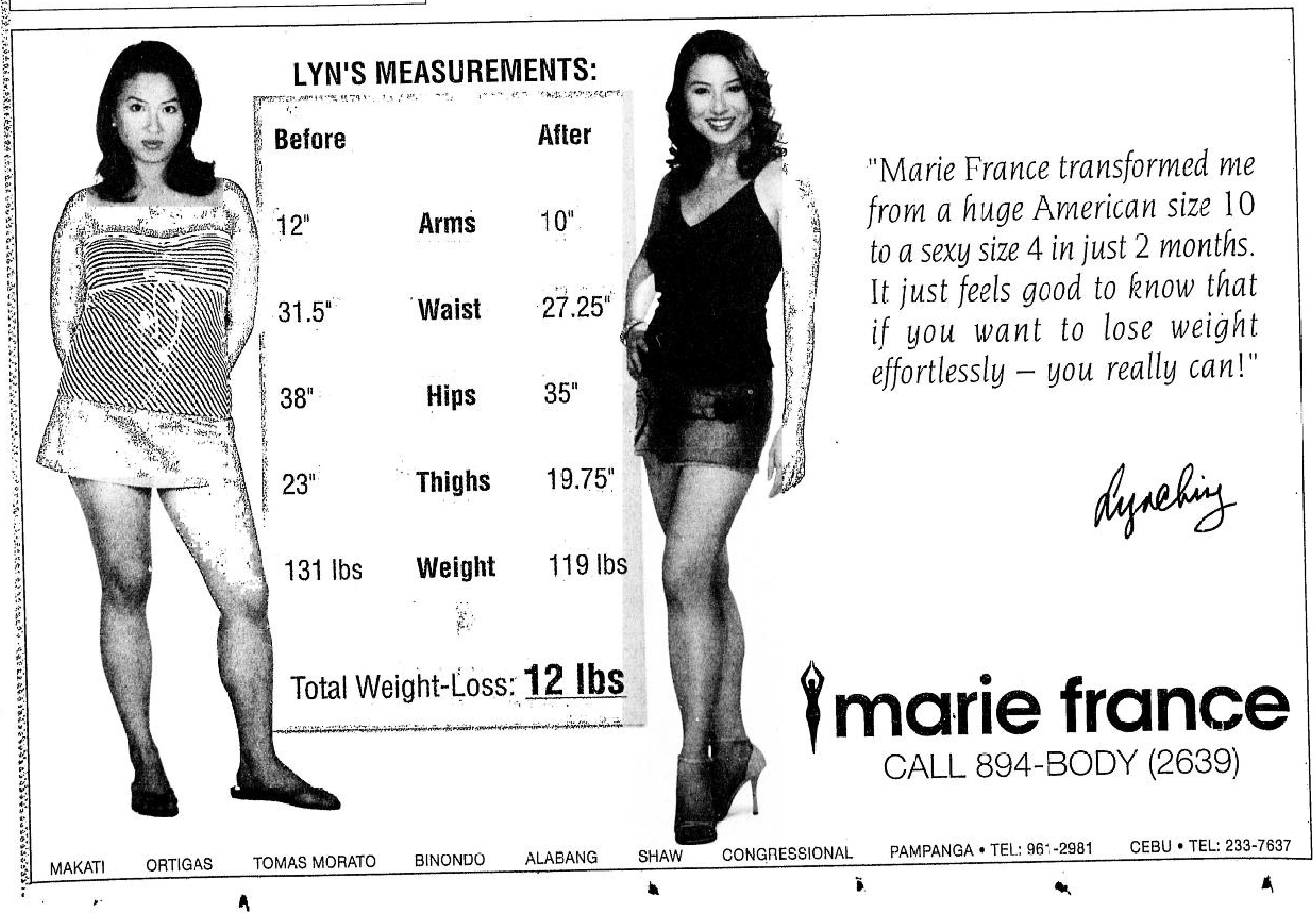
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65% want Arroyo out as best way to solve RP crisis

From page A1

The results showed that 59 percent of the respondents believed that Ms Arroyo's resignation was in the best interest of the country. Most of the respondents seeking the President's ouster were poor (Class D and E).

With 6 percent wanting Ms Arroyo forcibly removed either by a coup or foreign government intervention, the number of those who want the President out of office by any means went up to 65 percent.

Like the October 2005 survey, there was no clear trend on how Filipinos wanted Ms Arroyo replaced in case she resigned—38 percent thought it best that special elections be held; 21 percent favored Vice President Noli de Castro taking over either for the balance of Ms Arroyo's term or in a caretaker role for a new government under a new Constitution.

Only a third or 34 percent of Filipinos believed that the President's continued stay in office was the most beneficial scenario, and a large plurality of them were from the upper crust (Classes A, B and C).

These respondents were also split on whether Ms Arroyo should finish her term up to 2010 or stay only until Charter change had been completed.

Aversion to military rule

The survey also showed the Filipinos' keen aversion to military adventurism. Four out of 10 Filipinos said that a coup was the most inimical to the national interest at present, regardless of whether the military and police choose who should lead the country or they decide to lead the country themselves.

Only 29 percent thought that Ms Arroyo's resignation was most adverse to the country's interest, higher than the 19 percent who believed her continued stay in office was worst and the 12 percent who believed foreign intervention was the most contemptible.

Pulse Asia noted that there was no variation in the results between the March and October 2005 surveys.

"Reports of an aborted coup attempt against the Arroyo administration during the survey period apparently did not influence the public to be any more or any less averse to military coups d'etat," Pulse Asia said.

Pulse Asia pointed out that only 11 percent of Filipinos agreed with Ms Arroyo's boast that she was the best person to lead the country, the same number of Filipinos who thought actress Susan Roces should be in Malacañang.

Results were mixed on the best leader for the country with 23 percent picking De Castro, 17 percent choosing former President Joseph Estrada, and 13 percent opting for Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

GMA most unacceptable

But when asked to name the most unacceptable individual to lead the country, about a third or 32 percent of respondents picked the President, with the next five names getting no more than 11 percent each—Roces (11 percent), Bro. Eddie Villanueva (11 percent), former President Fidel V. Ramos (10 percent), Estrada (7 percent) and Lacson (7 percent).

When asked to pick who among the incumbent President and two former presidents they trusted the most, nearly half or 48 percent chose Estrada, which was higher than the 39 percent he got in the October 2005 survey. He was followed by Ramos (31 percent) and Ms Arroyo (22 percent).

In contrast, half of the respondents considered Ms Arroyo the least worthy of their trust, followed by Ramos (38 percent), and Estrada (25 percent).

Distrust ratings

"While the distrust ratings of former Presidents Ramos and Estrada declined by 11 and 9 percentage points, respectively, between October 2005 and March 2006, that of President Arroyo remained statistically the same (55 percent versus 50 percent)," Pulse Asia said.

Aside from Proclamation No. 1017, the significant events during the survey period were the arrests of some lawmakers, the crackdown on media, rallies commemorating the 20th anniversary of Edsa I, renewed calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation, the standoff at Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, the rescue and recovery operations in Leyte, and the peso's gyrations.

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THE THINGS students plan this summer include the youth's continuing protest against President Arroyo which they begin over again on Thursday in Quiapo, Manila. REM ZAMORA

US tells Erap, JV, Ping: We bugged you; legal notices served

From page A1

States to face charges under an extradition treaty between Manila and Washington.

Aragoncillo, 46, an intelligence analyst of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Michael Ray Aquino, 39, a former police senior superintendent and Lacson aide, were arrested in New Jersey and New York, respectively, last September on espionage charges in connection with the alleged passing of classified information to Filipino opposition leaders.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of 25 years imprisonment.

In all, 150 documents, including 37 classified as "secret," were allegedly transmitted to the Filipino leaders from May to August 2005.

White House 1st spy case

Last October, ABC News reported that Aragoncillo had also pilfered documents from the office of Vice President Dick Cheney in what it said was the first case of spying in the White House. Some of the documents were reported to be damaging to President Macapagal-Arroyo who was described as weak and overbearing.

Estrada has admitted getting documents from Aragoncillo, but stressed that these did not seem to be sensitive information. Lacson, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Rep. Roilo Golez of Parañaque also acknowledged receiving e-mails from either Aragoncillo or Aquino.

Asked if he got the legal notice, Estrada said, "No, I have not received any. Maybe they brought it to Polk (his house in San Juan) address, but my lawyers should have brought it here if there's any," said Estrada, who is detained in his Tanay rest house.

Asked if this would mean that he's going to New Jersey, Estrada said, "Okay yon, ha?"

Ejercito said he had received a notice from Interpol, through the NBI, informing him that he had been a recipient of information from Aragoncillo.

"It's nothing," he said.

Lacson confirmed he received the notice in December but shrugged it off as "a matter of statutory procedure." He said the notice simply told him that his e-mail account had been found in a laptop seized from Aquino. He said he had thrown the paper away.

In the legal notices, the Estradas were told that Judge Jose Linares of the US District Court of New Jersey authorized on Aug. 22, 2005, "the interception of wire and/or electronic communications" over the telephone and/or e-mail accounts of telephone number (856) 693-1614, LARAGONCILLO@hotmail.com and JUAN_MIGUEL0922@yahoo.com.

Phone and e-mails tapped

The notices stated that the interception happened between Aug. 22 and Sept. 12, 2005, "by on or about which date all original recordings were sealed by order of this court."

"During the period of authorized interception, wire and/or electronic communications to or from your telephone and/or communications were intercepted," the notices stated.

The sources said Lacson also received a similar notice.

A diplomatic source, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the legal notices were in line with the requirements under US law to notify persons who had undergone surveillance.

Signal of prosecution?

Asked whether the notices could be taken as a signal that its recipients faced prosecution, the source said, "We don't know at this point. It should be taken at its face value—as notices."

"It's like a warning to them to take the matter seriously, that they cannot ignore this and that anything can happen. It's actually favorable since they will no longer be taken by surprise by whatever legal action may follow," one lawyer said.

The source said the "prudent thing" for the Estradas to do was to consult with a US lawyer practicing in this field and make inquiries of the prosecutors if necessary. *With a report from Volt Contreras and Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

LACSON: It's a matter of statutory procedure.

EJERCITO served notice he may need a lawyer.

AQUINO: Former senior superintendent/Lacson aide

ARAGONCILLO: FBI intel analyst

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Deal with Marcoses needs Palace OK

By Alcuin Papa

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO would have to approve any compromise between the government and former First Lady Imelda Marcos not only on the latter's fabulous jewelry collection but all the ill-gotten Marcos assets said to be worth billions of pesos.

Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) Commissioner Ricardo Abcede yesterday welcomed the statement of Marcos' lawyer Roberto Sison affirming his client's openness to the idea of entering into a compromise with the government on all of the so-called Marcos wealth.

"In the end... we might still need the approval of the President on this matter as it concerns national interest. But this (Sison's statement) is a good development. What is important is that both sides are willing to come together and discuss [things]," Abcede said.

He said that if the government was willing to reach out "to communists and separatists," there was no reason it could not do the same with the Marcoses and their cronies.

Of late, the PCGG had said it was willing to enter into a compromise on the multibillion-peso coconut levy fund with businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and on four companies owned by taipan Lucio Tan.

Why not?

"We are talking with the communist rebels and the Moro separatists. Why can't we talk with Mrs. Marcos and their alleged cronies? Reaching out? Let's reach out to them as well," Abcede said.

The Supreme Court had already ruled, however, that the coconut levy funds were public in nature and thus belonged to the coconut farmers from whom they were collected, and the Tan companies were not ill-gotten and should be returned to the control of the taipan.

On the other hand, Abcede said, an out-of-court settlement with Mrs. Marcos would not be completed overnight. First, an inventory of the Marcos assets, including those seized and already sold by the government, would have to be taken.

Then, he said, the PCGG would have to come up with a sharing option, which the two parties could then negotiate.

Once an agreement was drawn, he said, the PCGG through the solicitor general would take this to the courts for final arbitration.

On the reported 70-30 sharing scheme in favor of the government being bandied about, Abcede said nothing was final since the decision would have to come from Malacañang.

"It's a very long process," he said, adding that there was no time-frame for completion of the deal.

For his part, Sison said the compromise being espoused by the PCGG was a "pragmatic approach" to ending almost two decades of litigation between the government and the Marcoses. He said an agreement should include all Marcos assets found in the Philippines and all over the world.

Oil firms cut prices of LPG

By Abigail L. Ho

THE HUGE DROP IN THE INTERNATIONAL contract price of liquefied petroleum gas this month has prompted oil firms to again reduce cooking gas prices by 56 centavos per kilogram.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. all slashed their LPG prices by the same level at 12:01 a.m. today.

The companies cited the reduction in the international contract price of LPG as well as competitive market forces as the reason for the rollback, the third this month.

With this new price reduction, Petron's Gasul can now be bought for between P496 and P506 per 11-kilogram cylinder, Shell's Shellane for between P505 and P520, and Total's TotalGaz by around P493.50, give or take P10 per cylinder.

These new suggested retail prices already include the 12-percent value-added tax.

The new retail price for Chevron's Caltex LPG was not available as of press time.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the international contract price of LPG shed almost $100 this month, falling to $530 per metric ton (MT) from an all-time high of $625.50 per MT in February.

In January, international prices soared to $582 per MT from $538 per MT the month before.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the DOE would "continue to closely monitor the developments in LPG prices in the world market to make sure that the market trends reflect in the domestic prices."

Since the start of the year, LPG prices have risen four times by P2.17 per kilogram or P23.87 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

Prices have since gone down thrice for a total of P1.68 per kilogram or P18.48 per cylinder.

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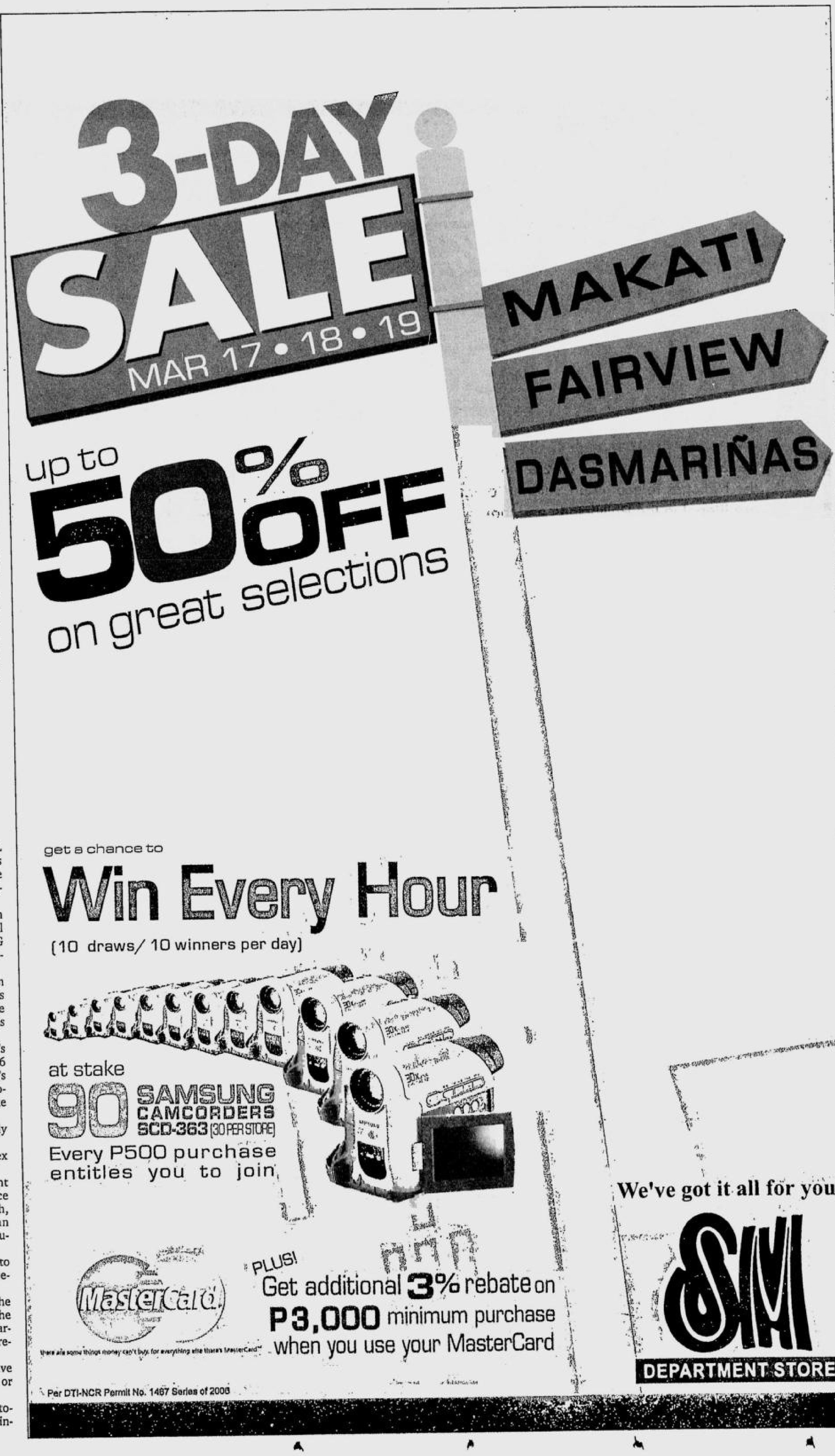

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Tough to be a Rosales after a Sin

From page A1

predecessor.

"I don't think I'm going to change—I'm a shepherd, especially to those in need," he told reporters Wednesday. He leaves on Friday for Rome.

Rosales said it wasn't fair to compare him with Sin, who helped oust Presidents Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001 and in the process defined the role of the Church in the largely Roman Catholic country.

Sin became the Church, the Church was Sin.

It's good that Rosales knows he's entering the Sacred College of Cardinals knowing who he is and "knowing what I want to be because my predecessor was really a charismatic person, a political figure."

More a home person

Rosales said he was more of a "home person," one who's happy "wearing slippers" around people like those of Mindanao where he once served as Bukidnon archbishop. But that's not to say that he's a detached observer in the face of social injustice. He had spoken out in the past when there was a need for it.

As one of 15 new princes of the Church, Rosales joins two Filipinos, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Jose Cardinal Sanchez who is now based at the Roman Curia.

"Unworthy as I am, I was selected for that," he said, recalling that he even asked Vidal if he should accept the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI.

"He told me, 'Don't insult the Holy Father. You don't do that.' (So) this is it. You enter into a special relationship with the chief shepherd of the universal church as a companion, cooperator, assistant and counselor."

Organizing farmers, cooperatives and even village folk for anti-illegal logging protest marches in Manila and catechizing them in the process—this was the world Rosales said he knew and grew up in.

Grass-roots politics

So while Sin looked at politics from the top, Rosales tackled it at the grass roots, with the same clarity of effort coming from a strictly moral and pastoral perspective.

"This is more or less my life so no need to, I would say, compare because he was in a completely different league," he said.

Rosales was cool to the idea of another Edsa uprising as President Macapagal-Arroyo faced a restive opposition seeking her resignation over allegations she stole the 2004 presidential election—a charge she has vehemently denied.

"It fails when you repeat," he said, explaining that events like the 1986 bloodless revolution were something people didn't prepare for. "We are wise men. We have to be intelligent and responsible. Let us be students of history."

No patent on Edsa I

Rosales also sought to put in context the widespread impression that Edsa I was a single-handed effort by Sin. No, the event didn't have his patent.

There were also bishops like Francisco Claver, Carmelo Morelos, the late Antonio Fortich, a 1973 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Public Service, and others who played key roles in restoring democracy, he noted.

"Please be fair to history," he said.

Besides, the Church's involvement in political and economic matters occupies only a small place in the whole gamut of its priorities, he said. "We don't want to imprison the Church in that little area."

'Theology of the crumbs'

More important to Rosales is to shepherd the poor, mainly by propagating the "theology of the crumbs" through his Pondo ng Pinoy. It's a pioneering project encouraging people to set aside as little as 25 centavos daily for the poor.

"You see, the powerful, they could fend for themselves. But the poor, somebody should go visit them, should look for resources for them and that's what we are doing," he said.

"So ask me to change, please do not for the sake of these people," said Rosales.

A source in the archbishop's staff told the INQUIRER that Malacañang had quietly inquired if Rosales would be receptive to the idea of Ms Arroyo attending his induction and offering a chartered plane to fly him and other bishops to Rome.

Rosales was reported to have politely declined the offer. The President was advised to attend a thanksgiving Mass instead in Manila on April 1, a day after his return.

Self-effacing

Declining the offer was consistent with the self-effacing character of Rosales who always made an effort never to make big fuss over his activities, the source said.

"It's not that he just didn't want the President to be there," the staff member said, "in all humility, he was really shy about it."

Asked what he would tell Pope Benedict XVI if he inquired about the situation in the Philippines, Rosales replied:

"Sometimes we magnify what is happening in the country. There are more countries where the situation is worse a hundred times. These are all within the attention and concern of the Holy Father. We could be the best torturers. The Holy Father might laugh at me."

Miriam to AFP …

From page A1

Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday took a swipe at Col. Tristan Kison, AFP spokesperson, for making the "really silly, fatuous statement."

She said: "These military men are dreaming.

"It is not intelligent for the Armed Forces to claim that only they are holding the nation together. It is not the [AFP] that is holding the nation together, it is the rule of law."

Santiago expressed the hope that "those who are titillated by the prospect of ruling the country without passing through a presidential election will have the intelligence to think twice before they join any military enterprise to this effect."

And then she let the military have it: "They are like worms. They should stay in their holes and not show their heads."

On Tuesday, Kison told reporters that the military had been a target of destabilization because it was "one of the strong pillars holding the nation."

"If we break," he said, "the nation will collapse."

Easy prey

Santiago also said the threat of a coup against President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration remained large because the low pay of military men meant that they could "easily be bought."

Thus, she said, the administration's enemies would try to unseat the President using the military.

"You can buy one brigade. You can buy the commander and he will distribute the largesse," said the senator, one of Ms Arroyo's staunchest allies.

"The main problem is that our military can easily be bought because of the extremely low compensation that they receive as members of the military," she told reporters.

According to Santiago, the administration cannot yet rest easy.

She said there were three critical dates for Ms Arroyo: "Oh, yes, we can expect that on May 1 during Labor Day. On June 12, that's for sure, and during the State of the Nation Address."

Dangerous game

But Santiago warned civilians, particularly businessmen, against financing coup attempts against the administration.

"These civilian components think they will be the ones who will be installed in the presidency. But that is not borne out by history. The result has always been that the military decided to keep power for itself," she noted, adding:

"So it is an extremely dangerous game to try to induce the military with money to overthrow President Arroyo because it is based on the impression that the government will remain civilian in character after President Arroyo leaves."

Pariah

Santiago also warned the AFP against taking over the government, saying that a military-ruled Philippines would become a pariah in the global community.

"Will they get recognition from the 200 countries or so in the international community?" she said, pointing out that "under international law, you will not be a full-fledged state unless you're able to get recognition from your fellow states."

She added: "We have already seen that the international community today does not want to recognize military dictatorships. So that will be the problem. We will become a sealed hermit kingdom once more if we have a military government."

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Pagasa warns of more disasters with onset of La Niña

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE NATION HAS HARDLY RECOVERED FROM the shock of the mudslide that buried an entire village in Southern Leyte last month, but now comes the weather bureau warning that the next three months may produce a similar catastrophe.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said that the number of typhoons during the La Niña period—predicted to hit from April to June—could increase by 200 percent.

For a country where at least 19 typhoons on the average enter its area of responsibility every year, that's saying a mouthful.

"The geology is there, the fault is there, and there is too much rain. The Southern Leyte mudslide is likely not the last that will happen during the year, considering the La Niña period. So we need to educate the people on the warning systems," Pagasa chief Graciano Yumul Jr. said in a press conference yesterday.

The weather bureau is closely watching the eastern seaboard, deemed to be the hardest hit by the La Niña phenomenon, so called because it is the reverse side of El Niño, which is characterized by a prolonged dry spell which often leads to drought.

Pagasa raised a flood and landslide warning in eastern Visayas, particularly Samar and Leyte; the Caraga region (the Agusan and Surigao provinces) especially Surigao; Bicol; northeastern Luzon and Davao Oriental, all of which are on the eastern seaboard.

"All typhoons will enter the country through eastern Visayas during this season," Yumul said.

Pagasa said it would undertake an education campaign targeting the barangay captains of all the 42,000 barangays in the country, noting that the village chiefs would be the key to disaster mitigation.

He said the bureau planned to distribute tens of thousand of primers on floods, storm surges, tornados, and tsunamis. He said they would be printed in the vernacular to make them easier to understand.

The government is also set to acquire two Doppler radars, devices that can measure wind velocity and predict the volume of rainfall, within the year.

"It's not the number of typhoons but the amount of rainfall and the wind strength that we are carefully monitoring," Yumul said.

Doppler radars cost anywhere between P55 million to P89 million each, depending on whether these are from Europe or Japan. The Philippines has allocated P110 million for the purchase of the radars this year and is hoping to buy 10 of the devices by 2010.

Pagasa said the conditions indicating that a La Niña loomed continued to be present based on the bureau's February monthly report.

Yumul said the World Meteorological Organization had mapped out two scenarios after the La Niña. One is that the La Niña will extend up to December. The other is that the phenomenon will transform into an El Niño, which is equally bad for the country.

"We don't know what's going to happen. That's why we are holding the climate forum monthly now," he said.

The climate forum, where Pagasa briefs weather-sensitive government agencies like the Department of Agriculture and local officials, used to be held quarterly.

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1st Reading: Gen 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders, "Listen to another example: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. (...) When harvest time came, the landowner sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the harvest. But the tenants seized his servants, beat one, killed another and stoned another.

Again the owner sent more servants, but they were treated in the same way.

"Finally, he sent his son, thinking: 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they thought: 'This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let us kill him and his inheritance will be ours.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do with the tenants when he comes?" They said to him, "He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and lease the vineyard to others who will pay him in due time."

And Jesus replied, "Have you never read what the Scriptures say? The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone. This was the Lord's doing; and we marvel at it. Therefore I say to you: the kingdom of heaven will be taken from you and given to a people who will yield a harvest."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they realized that Jesus was referring to them. They would have arrested him, but they were afraid of the crowd who regarded him as a prophet.

Commentary

Israel loved Joseph best and the familiar story evolves into jealousy, hatred, attempted murder. His older brother keeps the others from killing him and he is sold into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. Jesus' story tells of a property owner and his vineyard leased out to tenants and how they, in their greed, then their jealousy, take the vineyard for their own, treat the servants of the owner poorly, and then drag the owner's son outside the vineyard and murder him. Same old story, but Jesus speaks of himself and his coming death that will open the vineyard to others who will care for the vines, drink the wine and obey the one who shares it with them. Who do we stand with in this world?

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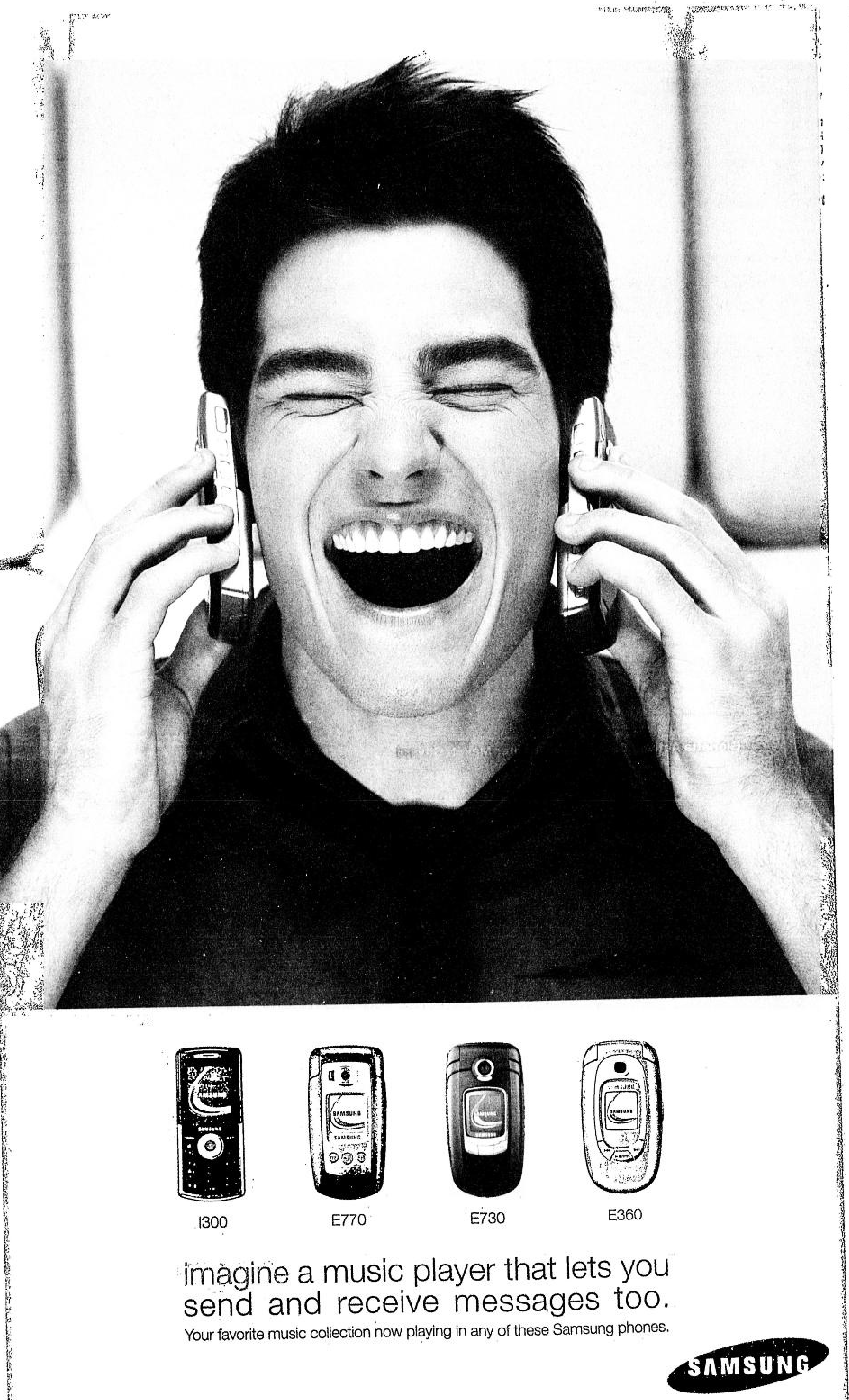
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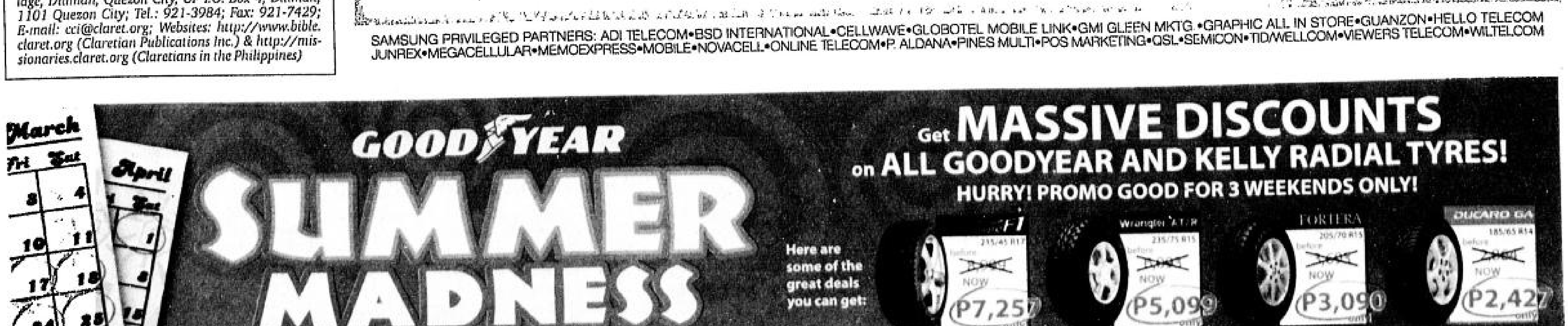
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From page A1

in strategic locations around the country possibly by the weekend.

Some 5,000 of these posters are to be distributed to police stations nationwide.

Should the authorities find the accused, reasonable force would be used to take them into custody, Lomibao said.

"We will apply the necessary force ... The force should be equal to the resistance. There shouldn't be any overkill," said the police chief.

The P3 million bounty for the six alleged co-conspirators is broken down as follows:

- P1 million for retired Capt. Felix Turingan, an alleged member of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. (PGBI), a fraternity of active and retired military and police officers that Honasan founded.
- P500,000 each for retired Colonels Ernesto Macahiya, Virgilio Briones and Romeo Lazo—all said to be members of the PGBI.
- P250,000 each for George Duldulao and Lina Reyes, both said to be on the staff of the former senator.

The six allegedly helped Honasan recruit junior military officers for the takeover of Oakwood on July 27, 2003.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno announced that the rewards would be given to anyone who could lead authorities to Honasan and his fellow accused.

"We are putting up this monetary reward in order to make more effective the effort to bring into custody these wanted persons," Puno said at a press conference.

The bounties were set upon the recommendation of the PNP Rewards Evaluation Committee, which Puno then approved through DILG Memorandum Circular 2006 231. He said the money would come from an existing allocation for incentives to government informants.

Hotline

People can call the police emergency hotline, Patrol 117, or send messages to 2920 for any information on Honasan and the six others, according to the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Except for Honasan and Turingan, no bounty was announced for the rest of the 16 people against whom the police had filed charges of rebellion for their involvement in a plot allegedly hatched by disgruntled military officers, communist rebels and civilians to topple the Arroyo administration.

The coup was to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Edsa I that toppled the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos on Feb. 24.

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, the PNP spokesperson, said no bounty was set for the others because arrest warrants had yet to be issued against them.

They include party-list Representatives Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, and Lisa Maza of Gabriela; Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson;

CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison, National Democratic Front spokesperson Luis Jalandoni, CPP central committee officials Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan official Nathaniel Santiago, NDF official Tirso Alcantara and NDF Bicol regional party head Sotero Llamas.

Warrants issued Feb. 28

Also charged with rebellion were lawyer Christopher Belmonte, retired Col. Jake Malajacan, First Lieutenants Angelbert Gay and Patricio Bumidang, both members of the Magdalo, and a person with an alias.

The Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 145 issued on Feb. 28 arrest warrants for Honasan and the six others.

Among those that have obtained copies of the arrest warrants were the Special Mission Unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Counter Intelligence Group, the Legal Action Unit of the Isafp (Intelligence Service of the AFP), the Southern Metro Manila Criminal Investigation and Detection Team of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

"With the reward money of P5 million for any information that will lead to his (Honasan's) arrest, we believe that we will be able to do so—bring him to the bar of justice," Pagdilao said.

Posters

He said Honasan and the others were still in the Philippines based on the last report of his men. "But you know they are highly mobile. They could be here, they could be there, they could be out of the country ... So the reason the reward system was approved was so we could effectively restrict their movement."

Police and NBI teams

The CIDG has teams ready to track down Honasan et al.

"They (the teams) are hunting down the 10 most wanted (persons). If there is an addition (to the) list, there will be teams that will focus on it," Pagdilao said.

The NBI, for its part, has formed two teams to track down and arrest Honasan and his co-conspirators.

"We have begun our search for Honasan, with the recent issuance of an arrest warrant against him (in coordination with the military and the PNP)," NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring said.

Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda, NBI Special Task Force (STF) chief, said he had created two 10-member teams to find Honasan and his alleged co-conspirators.

Esmeralda said Team Alpha, led by NBI STF executive officer Arnel Dalumpines, would concentrate on arresting Honasan.

"As of now we still have no idea where Honasan is because he has not been seen in public for months," Esmeralda said. "But we have good leads like the kind of vehicle Honasan has been using."

Honasan was last seen in Manila a day before Ms Arroyo declared a state of emergency.

Esmeralda said a second team, Team Bravo led by Supervising Agent Anthony Yu, would go after other personalities allegedly behind the foiled coup attempt.

Palace to Gringo: Surrender

Malacañang yesterday asked Honasan anew to surrender. "We call on him to live up to his stature as a former senator by voluntarily yielding to police authorities," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said he agreed with Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's proposal for a peaceful surrender by Honasan.

Defensor said he and Enrile had agreed to sit down and explore the latter's ideas on how to go about this.

Honasan cannot be expected to surrender unless the government reduces the charges against him, according to administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Santiago, a former trial court judge, said the only incentive for Honasan to surrender would be for government prosecutors to reduce the charges against him to inciting to or conspiracy to commit coup d'etat.

"Unless the prosecutors change the charge, Gringo will never surrender," Santiago said.

It happened long time ago

She said the government might find it hard to pin down Honasan on coup charges because it would have to present a witness who would testify that the former senator had used violence and stealth to try to overthrow the government.

"First of all, his alleged crime happened a long time ago. The Oakwood mutiny is not a recent disturbance in our country," she said.

"So no one can say that he was caught in flagrante delicto, unless they have an eyewitness. But if they had an eyewitness, he or she would have surfaced a long time ago," she said.

Santiago said mere "plotting or holding secret meetings" to plot the ouster. of the President would not qualify for the charge of coup d'etat.

Honasan had led several bloody coup attempts during the term of President Corazon Aquino. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño and Philip Tubeza*

Pa's advice to son: JPE tells Honasan not to surrender

From page A1

turned into people power, which ousted Marcos in 1986.

"I'm willing to put myself at the disposal of government, if they want, to work out an acceptable solution to the problem in a way that will not put the government in a bind and these young people in a situation where they could be accused of opportunism or of giving up their ideals," Enrile said.

"People are willing to die for ideals. You must not deprive them of that," he said.

Enrile said that he was in contact with his protegé but added that he was not involved in "anything that (Honasan) is accused of."

The administration charged Honasan with coup d'etat on Feb. 24 for allegedly being one of the brains of the 2003 Oakwood mutiny in Makati.

The Makati Regional Trial Court has issued an arrest warrant for Honasan.

"Yes, I talked to him. He's like a son to me," Enrile said. "I talked to him (Wednesday). I talked to him (yesterday) morning, but I would like to add I'm not a participant to anything he is accused of."

Asked what he advised Honasan, Enrile said: "I will not tell you what I will advise him, or what I advised him."

He said Honasan did not indicate what his plans were but Enrile said that he would have known if the former senator planned to overthrow the government.

"What I know is that he has no plan. I asked him. You know, if Greg has any effort to undertake, I would have known. He would have told me," Enrile said.

Emotional pain

As to government plans to spread posters of Honasan to help hasten his arrest, Enrile said: "I would not do that if I were these people, if they're thinking at all for the country. They should not be doing that because that would cause emotional pain to some people."

Enrile, a lawyer, said he did not believe that the government could prove that Honasan was guilty of the crime of coup d'etat.

"I don't think you can spell out coup d'etat based on the facts that I know of what happened in the case of Oakwood and in the case of the recent events mentioned in the papers," he said.

Not capital offense

Enrile said the "basic element" of the crime of coup d'etat was "a sudden attack" against the government to seize power.

"What was attacked (in Oakwood)? If you can consider that an attack by the Oakwood mutineers, they seized a building and they simply asked, I think, (for) somebody to step down," he said.

"There was no purpose in supplanting a government. Now, I do not know whether you can consider Oakwood a government building," he added.

Enrile said those who were planning to put up a military junta or revolutionary government could not be automatically charged with coup d'etat.

"For as long as they did not do any overt act, other than planning, thinking or writing the schema of government structure that they intended to set up, the most that you can spell out as a crime against them would be probably a conspiracy to commit a crime, which is not a capital offense. It is a bailable offense," Enrile said.

Cooler heads

Enrile called for cooler heads to prevail and warned against taking any precipitate action that could worsen the country's political crisis.

He said his experience with Edsa I taught him to stop participating in plots to violently overthrow the government.

"Because of the experience I went through, because of Edsa I, I really made a promise that I will never participate in any effort to unseat a government of this country through the use of force," Enrile said.

Dangerous

"It's dangerous, not only for myself, but also for the participants—I was jailed twice, but for the country. Once you unleash that force, you will never know where it will bring us," he said.

"But one thing is for sure, it will mean blood, blood of Filipinos spilling in the streets. And I think the less we talk about these things the better for everybody. We talk too much," he said.

Rogues' gallery hit: Violation of presumption of innocence

From page A1

gallery—President Macapagal-Arroyo's idea, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez—could constitute one more impeachable offense on Ms Arroyo's part.

The CLCL said it would file criminal and administrative charges against Gonzalez in the Office of the Ombudsman. The case will center on the "illegal" use of public funds to go after "personal enemies of the President," it added.

Bernas said the planned public display of pictures of 16 perceived enemies of the state was violative of their constitutional right of "presumption of innocence and privacy." *(Story on Page A1.)*

"It's something along the line of a police officer exhibiting people in public who have been arrested. If they have not been convicted [or] charged, they are presumed to be innocent and their dignity should be respected. There is the very serious assault on dignity, I think," said Bernas, dean emeritus of the Ateneo Law School and a columnist of the INQUIRER.

Wild, Wild West

Asked to comment, Gonzalez said there was nothing illegal in the planned rogues' gallery.

"How can it be unconstitutional when [the funds] will be used for the arrest of fugitives from justice?" he said.

But Bernas pointed out that if there were "clear violations" by perceived enemies of the government and there were arrest warrants, they could be arrested and duly charged.

"No need for bounty," he said. "Bounty was very useful, I think, in the times of the Wild, Wild West... when they had posters all over the city [saying] 'Wanted dead or alive.'"

Gonzalez had earlier said the amounts to be offered for information leading to the arrest of the so-called "conspirators" had yet to be determined.

But some members of the Palace cluster on intelligence supposedly wanted the bounty to go as high as P10 million per head.

Witch-hunt

Lawyer Neri J. Colmenares said public money should not be spent on this "witch-hunt," which, he observed, was "generally against political dissenters."

Colmenares likewise said the public posting of the pictures of Ms Arroyo's perceived enemies was "a violation not only of [one's] constitutional right to privacy, but also of [one's] right to be presumed innocent."

"These are witch-hunting processes that use not only public funds but also the Department of Justice and the Philippine National Police, both public offices which should not be used for public persecution," he said.

Colmenares said the money would be better used to go after Jocelyn Bolante, the former agriculture undersecretary who was charged with graft for the P728-million fertilizer scam, and Virgilio Garcillano, the former election commissioner who was linked to the purported rigging of the 2004 elections.

The planned case against Gonzalez will be for culpable violation of Republic Act No. 3019 (the Anti-graft Law), which states that public officials "must act with justness and not discriminate against anyone," Colmenares said.

Mockery

Lawyer Romeo Capulong of the Public Interest Law Center aired a similar opinion, saying the rogues' gallery would violate "the right to life and liberty" as well as the constitutional doctrine of presumption of innocence.

Capulong, counsel for the six party-list representatives listed, warned at a press conference that he would hold Gonzalez "criminally, civilly and administratively liable" if the Arroyo administration went ahead with its plan.

"We demand that you desist from your plan to malign, demonize and violate the fundamental rights of our clients," said Capulong, reading from a one-page letter he sent to Gonzalez yesterday.

"Such act will... result in the most extreme case of forcible abduction and summary execution by death squads identified with government forces who are now stalking our clients," he said.

He also said Gonzalez and Ms Arroyo were "making a mockery of the entire justice system."

Capulong is the legal counsel of Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador, Anakpawis Representatives Rafael Mariano and Crispin Beltran, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, and suspected communist rebels Vic Ladlad, Nathaniel Santiago, Randal Echaniz, Rey Claro Casambre, Tita Lubi and Rafael Baylosis.

'Just file charges'

Other legal eagles weighed in on the issue.

"If they have a list, they should just file charges. By talking about the list, they send a warning to everyone else so that the target is not just the people on the list but [others] who are in danger of being placed there," said Raul Pangalangan, former law dean of the University of the Philippines.

Anselmo Cadiz, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, said Ms Arroyo's actions—including the planned rogues' gallery and the use of public funds to go after Malacañang's perceived enemies—would add to her long list of impeachable offenses.

License to kill

Mariano said a rogues' gallery was a clear threat against freedom, human rights and life itself because it would deprive him and his colleagues of due process and an "impartial, independent and effective" trial.

Ocampo warned that the plan would give law enforcement agencies the license to hunt, attack and even kill members and leaders of progressive groups.

Maza said unleashing bounty hunters was "a testament to this government's resort to the massacre of its political enemies."

"This is trial by publicity at its worst," she said. "There is no court that has passed judgment on us, yet [they] are already sentencing to death people critical of her administration."

Maza also said she would hold Ms Arroyo responsible for "whatever happens to us."

Said Virador: "To put up bounty money to hunt down suspected coup plotters flaunts the fascist, iron-hand approach of Ms Arroyo in dealing with the current political situation. This is also part of the total government crackdown on GMA's critics."

In bad faith

In the Netherlands, the chair of the National Democratic Front panel negotiating peace with the Arroyo administration said the latter acted in bad faith when it "converted" the list of people to be accorded immunity under the 1995 Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) into a list of persons to be arrested.

"The Arroyo regime has converted a solemn and binding peace agreement into an instrument of fascist repression," said Luis Jalandoni.

"By this worst act of treachery and flagrant violation of the people's basic democratic rights, the regime is going down the path of all-out tyranny and war. It is bound to be met by the intensifying resistance of the people," he said.

The Philippine government and the NDF panel signed the Jasig on Feb. 24, 1995. The peace talks have been stalled for various reasons.

But under the Jasig, all peace negotiators, consultants, staffers and supporters of both sides who took part in the peace negotiations are covered by safety and immunity guarantees.

The agreement remains in effect, according to Jalandoni.

"Now, the Arroyo regime, in a most reprehensible act of bad faith, has put all those who were duly covered with safety and immunity guarantees on the wanted list, to be charged with rebellion and to be hunted down like criminals," Jalandoni said.

Among the NDF personalities on the list were Jalandoni himself and Jose Maria Sison, NDF chief political consultant and supposed founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Jalandoni said even the joint secretariat of the peace talks funded by the Dutch government was being threatened with political repression.

"Members of the joint secretariat and its staff, who generously agreed to the invitation of the NDF to help the joint monitoring committee of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, are now among those threatened with rebellion charges and arrest," he said.

With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

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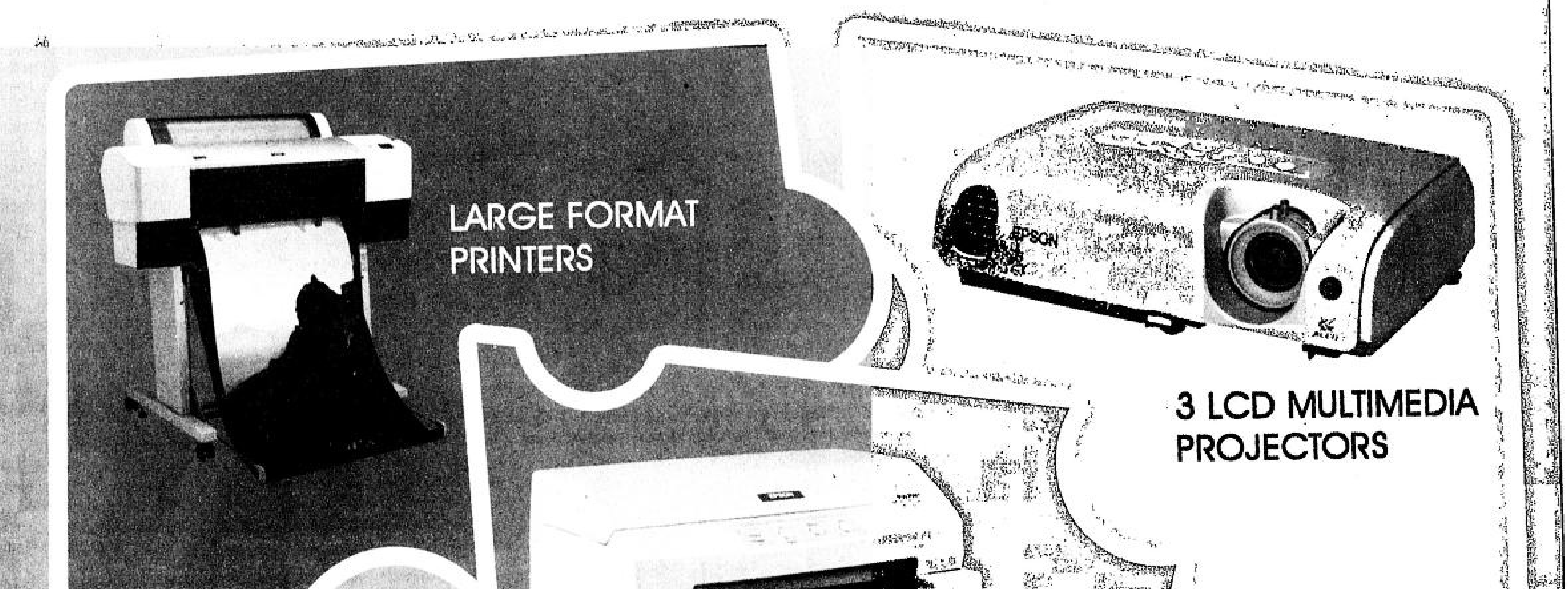
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RP is Asia's kidnapping hot spot, says think tank

THE WEAK RULE OF LAW, RAMPANT corruption in the police ranks and ineffective law enforcement continue to make the Philippines Asia's kidnapping hot spot, according to a report by a leading risk consultancy group.

The Pacific Strategies and Assessments (PSA) yesterday released a report saying the Philippine government had failed to address "these factors with any consistency or political will" and as a result kidnapping was likely to flourish in this Southeast Asian nation of 84 million people.

Reacting to the report, the Philippine National Police claimed it had made progress in curbing kidnappings.

"We are doing our best to keep this particular crime within manageable levels. Compared to the past years, we have made some headway," PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said.

But the Asian-based consultancy group said in its annual report on kidnapping in the Philippines that a total of 44 abductions were reported to police and government agencies last year, a 50-percent increase over 2004.

Main targets

The PSA also pointed out that the vast majority of kidnapping cases were not reported to the authorities. The consultancy group said the actual number of kidnappings in the Philippines in 2005 was estimated to be three times the official figure and security analysts reckoned that a kidnapping occurred every three days somewhere in the country.

Chinese-Filipinos, who represent about 3 percent of the total population, remain the main targets of kidnapping syndicates, accounting for 35 percent of all kidnappings in the past three years, the PSA report said. Eleven percent of the kidnap victims were foreign nationals.

"As a close-knit society, Chinese-Filipinos generally make attractive targets because they rarely involve police officials in the negotiation phase and they tend to pay ransom demands quickly," the report said.

"Chinese-Filipino communities also control approximately 60-70 percent of wealth in the country and are largely perceived as wealthier than their Filipino counterparts."

Victims blamed

Pagdilao said the reluctance of victims to cooperate with the PNP was hampering its efforts to solve kidnapping cases. This is one of the factors that "are contributory to the existence of kidnapping in the Philippines," he said.

If only victims would come out and help in the prosecution of suspected kidnappers, "there is a good chance that we will be able to put an end to kidnapping," the PNP spokesperson said.

The PSA report, however, said the PNP "is both part of the problem and solution" when it comes to kidnapping.

"Many kidnap victims refuse to cooperate with the PNP due to lingering suspicion that the organization protects kidnap-for-ransom syndicates and feeds intelligence back to kidnap gangs during the negotiating process," the report said.

"These suspicions are not unfounded and there are endless incidents of police collusion with kidnap syndicates operating in Manila."

Rebuilding image

Pagdilao said "a great deal" had been done to rebuild the tarnished image of the police force.

"The creation of special task forces, like Pacer (Presidential Anti-Organized Crime and Emergency Response), in going against kidnappers has greatly helped in getting back the trust of the people, especially the victims," the PNP spokesperson said.

"So we just have to work some more so we can be able to get fully the confidence and trust of the Filipino people," he added.

The PSA report said the PNP's Pacer task force had been active in infiltrating the kidnap syndicates but added: "With the Philippine economy struggling and the potential for relatively large ransoms, it is fairly easy for syndicates to recruit new members."

"The capacity for these syndicates to multiply far exceeds Pacer's ability to infiltrate and disband them," the report said. *Reports from AFP and Luigi A. del Puerto*

Pasig businessman killed in front of wife; she tags Chavit

From page A1

Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Relatives and friends pulled her back inside the hospital before she could get near the reporters.

Police officials said the killing could be business-related. Umale also owned a home depot strip mall and a restaurant strip at the Ortigas Center.

Umale's men shot it out with the security guards of Chavit Singson in January 2005, as his family and the Ynareses of Rizal, who employed Singson's security agency, figured in a tug-of-war for the operation of a parking lot on Pearl Drive.

Singson: Umale an ally

Reached by the INQUIRER by phone, Singson, who was in Manila, said he was not involved in the murder of Umale.

"I vehemently deny all allegations hurled against me regarding Umale's death," Singson said.

The governor said he was "an ally, not an enemy of Umale."

"(H)e has been asking for my help in his many cases. I tried to help him within my limits and bounds of the law," Singson said.

In a statement, Singson said he did not know why Umale's wife was linking him to the slaying.

"All I can say for now is that her husband was not exactly a good man. *Masamang tao si* Umale (He was a bad person). *Katunayan marami siyang kaso. Kaya marami siyang kaaway* (In fact, he had many cases. That's why he had many enemies)," Singson said.

The governor said he was willing to help in any impartial investigation of the case.

Director Vidal Querol, head of the National Capital Region Police Office, rushed to the crime scene and told reporters his men would "leave no stone unturned."

"We heard that (Umale) had figured in several business conflicts. We are still investigating," Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino, Eastern Police District director, told the INQUIRER.

PO2 Roderick Quiton said Umale and his wife arrived at the building at about 11:30 a.m. Because another vehicle was parked right in front of the entrance, Umale and his wife got off their car a few meters away.

Just across the street, one of his three children was attending classes as a freshman at the University of Asia and the Pacific, her classmates later said.

A stall owner said Umale would go to the building every day, where he had a unit and an office on the eighth floor.

The building, in front of the university, has a driveway running through the middle of the compound, in between restaurant stalls and the main entrance to the building. The third to eighth floors serve as dormitories.

Handguns

Umale got off on the right passenger side of his car, while his wife had gone ahead. He gave a few instructions to his driver and walked toward the entrance.

But while he was walking, four men approached him. Two of them pulled out .45-cal. revolvers, witnesses told the police.

Suddenly, 20-year-old Bryan, a waiter at Salsa Rossa Restaurant, which is right in front of the entrance across from the driveway, heard successive gunshots.

"The gunshots were very loud. We ducked for cover," Bryan said.

He got up after a few seconds and saw Umale slumped on the pavement, blood all over his face.

One of the four men had shot Umale in the head. Lanton, who rushed to help his boss, was shot in the stomach.

Well-planned

The killers walked casually out of the building after the crime, as Clarissa rushed to embrace her already lifeless husband.

Witnesses said the gunman was wearing a black shirt. Another was wearing a cream jacket and was between 30 and 35 years old. Another was wearing a blue barong, witnesses added.

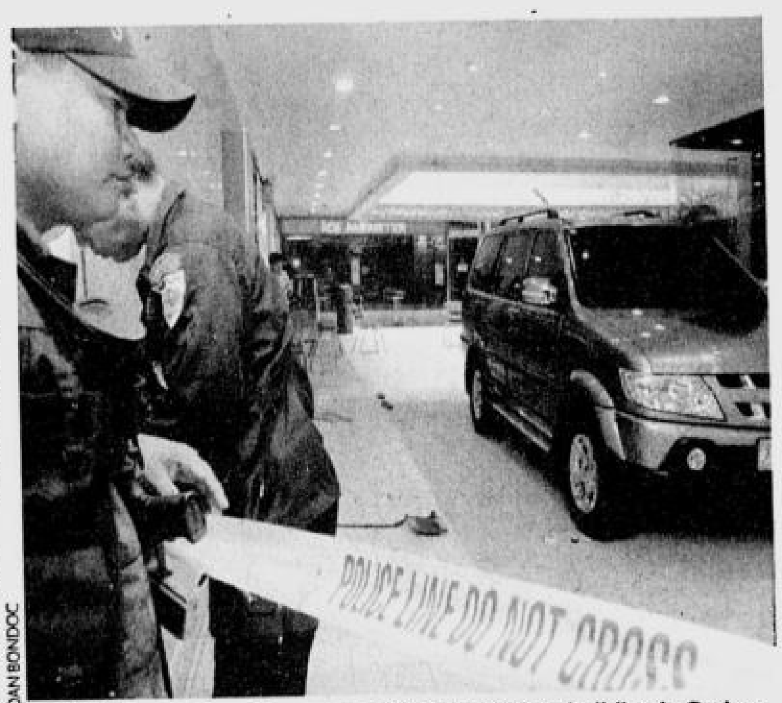
"The killing was well-planned. They made sure he would not survive," Alejandrino said.

Witnesses said minutes before the crime, the four killers entered the Mocha Blends coffee shop on the mezzanine of the building. They occupied a table in the open area of the coffee shop, with a clear view of the entrance.

They were not able to finish their orders. The police found two glasses half-filled with iced tea, a bottle of water, two glasses of water, a plate with fried eggs, beef *tapa* and rice on the table.

A student who had sat beside them told the police that when Umale arrived, the four men left the restaurant, descended the stairs on the right side of the building and walked about 20 meters to the main entrance.

It was all over in less than three minutes, according to SPO1 Gimener Tingne.



JOAN BONDOC

POLICE secure the crime scene at the Pearl Plaza building in Ortigas Center in Pasig where businessman Leonardo Umale was shot dead.

Umale had many enemies

By Luige A. del Puerto

BUSINESSMAN LEONARDO Umale had many enemies and was himself no stranger to controversy.

In January last year, it took Pasig City Mayor Vicente "Enteng" Eusebio to forge a peace deal between the Umale and Ynares clans, which were fighting over a stretch of parking in the Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

That year, followers of the two camps nearly clashed on Pearl Drive, where the two groups had business interests.

On one side was Leonardo Umale, owner of Pearl Plaza, a commercial establishment across from the University of Asia and the Pacific. On the other side was Creekside Park Inc., the company that was awarded a contract by an Ortigas company to manage the parking stretch.

Also on the side of Creekside was Casimiro Ynares III, a son of Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares, who had said he was a personal friend of the Creekside owners. The Ynareses own Manila Luxury, a residential condominium located at the end of Pearl Drive.

After meeting with Eusebio that month in a hotel, the feuding families agreed to declare the contested area a "free parking space."

Chavit's men

Days before, a confrontation between Umale and his two sons, on one hand, and men from the Superb Security Agency on the other, ended with security officer Jelly Dioneda getting hit with a bullet in the right shoulder.

It is still unclear to date who shot Dioneda. The confrontation was captured on video.

Superb Security Agency is reportedly owned by a son of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

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06-16	106,073 sqm raw land with CARP Exemption	Bgy Dona Jacoba, Tanauan, Batangas	P 350.00 / sqm
06-17	35,138 sqm raw land with CARP Exemption	Bgy Suplang, Tanauan, Batangas	P 350.00 / sqm
06-18	450,000 sqm raw land with DAR Conversion	Bgy Batas, Silang, Cavite (beside Riviera Golf & Sports Club)	P 800.00 / sqm
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06-20	132,189 sqm residential raw land	Bgy Mapalad, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija (near Fort Magsaysay)	P 400 / sqm
06-21	17,996 sqm commercial lot	Acharon Blvd., General Santos City	P 17,000.00 / sqm
06-22	2,584 sqm commercial lot	Acharon Blvd., General Santos City	P 17,000.00 / sqm
06-23	5,065 sqm commercial lot	Acharon Blvd., General Santos City	P 17,000.00 / sqm
06-24	6,465 sqm commercial lot	Acharon Blvd., General Santos City	P 17,000.00 / sqm
06-25	2,291 sqm commercial lot (not contiguous)	Acharon Blvd., General Santos City	P 15,000.00 / sqm

Interested bidders may obtain bidding documents starting March 20, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00 from the Office of the Head, Property Management, 3/F, RSBS Bldg., Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

A Pre-Bidding Conference is scheduled on March 24, 2006 at 10:00 AM, Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their representatives on April 5, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

For further inquiries, you can call MS. LIZA HIZON or MR. DARWIN MANZANO at telephone numbers 9124718 or 9114071 local 249

(PDI - March 17, 18 & 19, 2006)

Bernas urges SC to speed up ...

From page A1

sion of civil liberties.

For as long as it fails to rule on cases brought before it involving Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, Executive Order No. 464 and the government's so-called "calibrated preemptive response" policy against antigovernment demonstrations, the court in effect is lending legitimacy to these allegedly unconstitutional edicts and policies, Bernas said.

Last bulwark of democracy

"We are expecting the Supreme Court to come to a decision because we see the (court) as the last bulwark of liberty," the Jesuit priest said. "But the reverse can also be true because the (court) has legitimated actions that were later disowned by the 1987 Constitution."

"The Supreme Court can be a legitimizer of what's going on," Bernas added, recalling the Marcos era when the court declared as legal laws that allowed military courts to have jurisdiction over civilians and the "automatic suspension" of the writ of habeas corpus under martial law, among others. These same laws, he said, were later "disowned" by the 1987 Constitution.

EO 464, CPR, 1017

The question on the constitutionality of EO 464, which bars government officials from testifying in congressional hearings without Ms Arroyo's approval, has dragged on for about six months. In the case of PP 1017, declaring a state of national emergency, the court has given the parties 15 days to submit memoranda following last week's oral arguments.

The court also still has to rule on petitions assailing the constitutionality of the government's "calibrated preemptive response" policy of quashing protest demonstrations, which were brought to it in October.

The news conference in which Bernas spoke was arranged by the Alternative Law Groups Inc. and the Counsels for the Defense of Civil Liberties to call for "an immediate stop to all government policies that violate civil liberties and suppress the people's exercise of their rights."

Asked if his statements were prompted by the fact that the President had many appointees in the high court—including Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban—Bernas said he would "rather not mention personalities," explaining that the propensity of the court to act as a legitimizer was "institutionally ... built-in."

SC legitimized martial law

"It's a legitimizer, and that happened under martial law," Bernas said. "Incidentally, for all the time that there is delay in decisions, the actions which are not decided on are deemed to be valid. So to that extent, EO 464, for as long as it is not decided upon by the (court), is presumed to be valid."

"Things that are going on now, for as long as they are not decided, the presumption would be for validity. If it continues indefinitely, then it could mature into something permanent," he said.

Asked if he was happy with the delays, Bernas replied: "I would be happier if there would be an earlier decision."

Queried whether he found the delays suspicious, he said: "Not necessarily, it just makes me unhappy."

"They should decide on it soon. I don't see why they still gave the parties 15 days to submit the memorandum" on the cases involving the state of emergency declaration.

'Clear, present danger rule'

Bernas said that the warrantless arrests and the clampdown on at least one newspaper during the state of emergency could have been done only under martial law.

Asked about reported plans of the government to go after the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism for posting the "Hello Garci" conversations on its website, Bernas said the matter should be assessed through the "clear and present danger rule."

"These articles are so powerful that there is imminent danger that people will actually rise and revolt, that takes very persuasive force to be able to incite sedition. My recollection is that the offended party has not complained of violation of privacy. If privacy has not been violated, then the government has no reason to complain," he said.

OMBUDSMAN'S REPLY

Gutierrez: My job is to uphold justice

OMBUDSMAN MERceditas Gutierrez yesterday said her mandate is to uphold justice and not to protect erring government officials, including President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Reacting to a challenge from Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio Jr. that she resolve immediately all cases involving the President and her allies, Gutierrez said she would resolve all pending cases, but "only after a thorough study."

Gutierrez, who succeeded lawyer Simeon Marcelo as Ombudsman late last year, wondered why Gervacio would even be issuing a challenge to her now when it was he who was in office when the cases were filed.

"Those cases were during his time. Now he is asking me to resolve them immediately. He should know the status of these cases since he was here. He should have done his job," Gutierrez said in a phone interview.

Conviction rate

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio also took exception to Gervacio's claim that the Office of the Ombudsman has lost its zeal in prosecuting erring government officials.

He said it was during Marcelo's time that the Ombudsman's conviction rate of erring government personnel soared. He said it was also during Marcelo's time that the level of public support, trust and confidence for the office rose.

Gervacio, who is set to retire next week, decried the supposed depths to which the Ombudsman's office had fallen since the accession of Ms Arroyo, purportedly losing its "aggressiveness and public appeal" since the departure of Ombudsman Aniano Desierto in 2002.

He said Gutierrez should prove that she is not a tool of Malacañang by resolving the cases against the President, former justice secretary Hernando Perez, Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and former agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante. *Nelson F. Flores*

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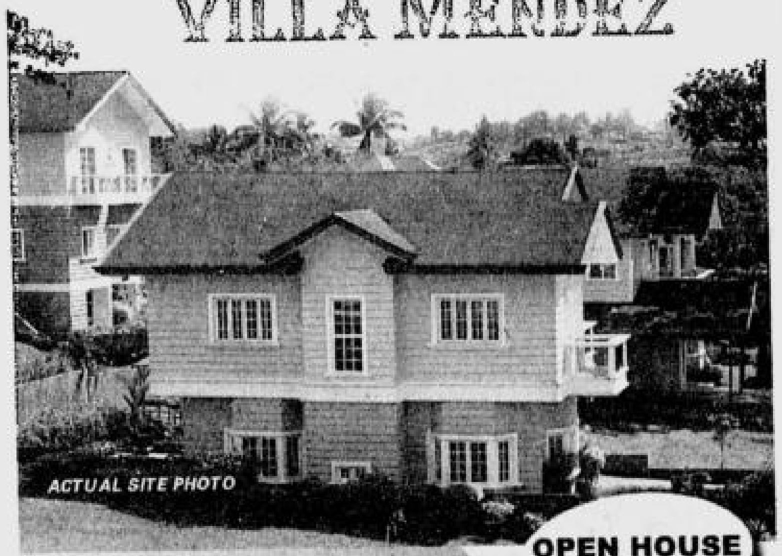

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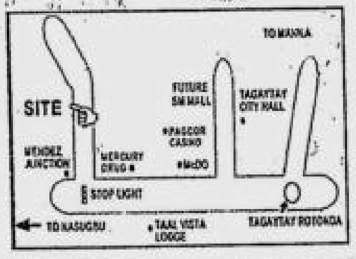

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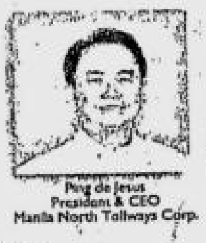
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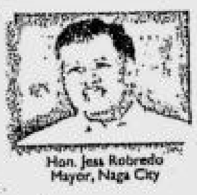
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Effective April 1, 2006, the Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) will be adjusted downward by 47.8% from P0.46 to P0.22 per cubic meter because of the appreciation of the peso. The average exchange rate went down to P51.82 per US Dollar in February, 2006 compared to P54.56 per US Dollar in November, 2005.

FCDA is a tariff mechanism used by utility companies that is adjusted upwards to recover losses if the peso depreciates and downwards if the peso appreciates against other currencies. Maynilad Water has to continue paying for the foreign exchange denominated Concession Fees to the MWSS, as well as loans required for its service expansion and improvements

The decrease in FCDA was approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 06-004-CA as confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 2006-068, both dated March 9, 2006

Maynilad's concession area covers the cities of Manila (all but portions of San Andres & Sta. Ana), Quezon (west of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional, Mindanao Ave: the northern part starting from the Districts of the Holy Spirit & Batasan Hills), Makati (west of South Super Hi-way), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa and Valenzuela, and the towns of Navotas and Malabon all in Metro Manila; Cavite City, and the towns of Bacoor, Imus, Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario-all in Cavite province

Gov't wants Piatco ruling clarified

By Nikko Dizon and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THOUGH EVERYONE EXPECTED A COMplete surrender and a finis after the government stated it had no choice but to comply with a final ruling of the Supreme Court ordering it to pay P3 billion to the consortium that built the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3, holding actions are still prolonging the controversy.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) said yesterday it was ready to comply with the tribunal's ruling but added it needed an explanation on issues regarding the "right to exercise ownership."

"We're still seeking clarification from the SC the right to exercise the acts of ownership," Miaa General Manager Alfonso Cusi said.

Cusi said the motion for clarification had been filed by the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), acting as the airport authority's legal counsel. Cusi, however, could not recall when the OSG motion was filed.

"The Pasay RTC (Regional Trial Court) decision on the expropriation said that you (government) have possession of the Naia 3 but you can't exercise ownership until you pay the P3 billion," Cusi explained.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government already had the funds to pay the P3-billion down payment to Naia 3 builder Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), but added that the government wanted to be clarified on whether the sum should be paid to Piatco fully or separately to its partners like Fraport AG and contractor Takenaka Corp. of Japan.

Also, Ermita said, he wanted to get the court's opinion on whether the government could enter into lease agreements with private parties once it paid the P3 billion.

Ermita said that the government was determined to have a soft opening for Naia 3, which he claimed was 2 percent to 3 percent away from completion, by the end of this month or by the first week of April.

Cusi echoed Ermita when asked if the government would open the facility—mothballed for nearly four years—on March 31, saying, "That's the aspiration.

"It will be a partial opening. We have to make use of it while completion works are still going on," he said.

Cusi said that the Miaa planned on a "rolling opening" of the Naia 3, but did not say when this would take place. But since last January, the Miaa had already set a March 31-deadline for the completion of all the finishing touches on the terminal and had even begun a countdown within the agency.

But Piatco is planning to block the government's plan to open Naia 3.

The consortium led by the Cheng family claimed that opening the terminal without fully compensating Piatco would violate the court's decision. Piatco is demanding between $350 million and $550 million from the government. Also, Piatco stressed that the court specifically ordered the government to compensate Piatco and not any of its partners like Fraport in a separate deal.

In a statement yesterday, Piatco president Cheng Yong expressed satisfaction over the SC resolution.

AIRPORT workers hose down the tarmac of the controversial Terminal 3 of th airline Cebu Pacific.

Antimine group duped GMA, says Albay vice gov

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WAS duped into releasing P10 million to some Sorsogon towns and into forming an independent commission for nonexistent reasons, the vice governor of Albay alleged yesterday.

Vice Gov. James Calisin said the alleged mercury scare in Sorsogon, which prompted Ms Arroyo to make the release, was an invention by a few personalities in Sorsogon and antimining groups for their own vested interests, to block Lafayette's Rapu Rapu project in Albay and at the same time to generate undeserved revenues.

In a press statement, Calisan said five studies by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Bfar) and one by the University of the Philippines "proved beyond reasonable doubt that the mercury contamination" in Sorsogon never existed.

"But some quarters persisted in this lie until their own fishermen couldn't sell their catch thereby losing their only means of livelihood, and then used this tragedy of their own making to ask for money from the President," he said.

He said the President released P10 million last month supposedly to help the affected Sorsogon fishermen and formed an independent commission on the insistence of Bishop Arturo Bastes to find out if the Rapu Rapu project indeed caused the mercury problem.

"Knowing that there was no mercury problem, some parties submitted their own fish samples that Bfar said had mercury above the tolerable limit. But no one knew who took the samples, how and where the samples were taken. It was this unscientific study that was used to fan the mercury issue," he said.

Last week, Albay's Sangguniang Panlalawigan unanimously passed a resolution asking the National Bureau of Investigation to find out who submitted the contaminated fish to BFAR. The resolution will be released as soon as all the SP members have signed it.

"Everybody who victimized the estimated 5,000 Sorsogon fishermen and accused us in Albay of not doing anything when in fact we were only following the dictates of due process must be made to account for what they have done. They must also face the legal consequences of lying to the President to get funds from the national government that could have been used for genuine calamities like the landslide in Southern Leyte," he said.

Calisin said the supposedly independent commission to investigate alleged mercury poisoning in the area is not independent since Bishop Bastes, who now heads the body, had publicly and repeatedly called for the closure of Lafayette's mining operation in Rapu Rapu and had in fact selected antimining members to compose the commission.

Plan holders hale CAP to high court

SOME 100 PLAN HOLDERS OF THE AILING College Assurance Philippines (CAP) yesterday asked the Supreme Court to nullify a lower court's stay order that allowed the CAP to temporarily stop paying its plan holders so it can recover from its financial troubles.

In a petition filed before the high court, the petitioners, mostly parents of the education plan beneficiaries, said the Makati court's ruling effectively prevented policyholders from obtaining payments from the pre-need company's estimated P21 billion trust fund.

They said the ruling unduly prejudiced some 940,000 CAP policyholders at a time when they need the money most for the "final exams" season.

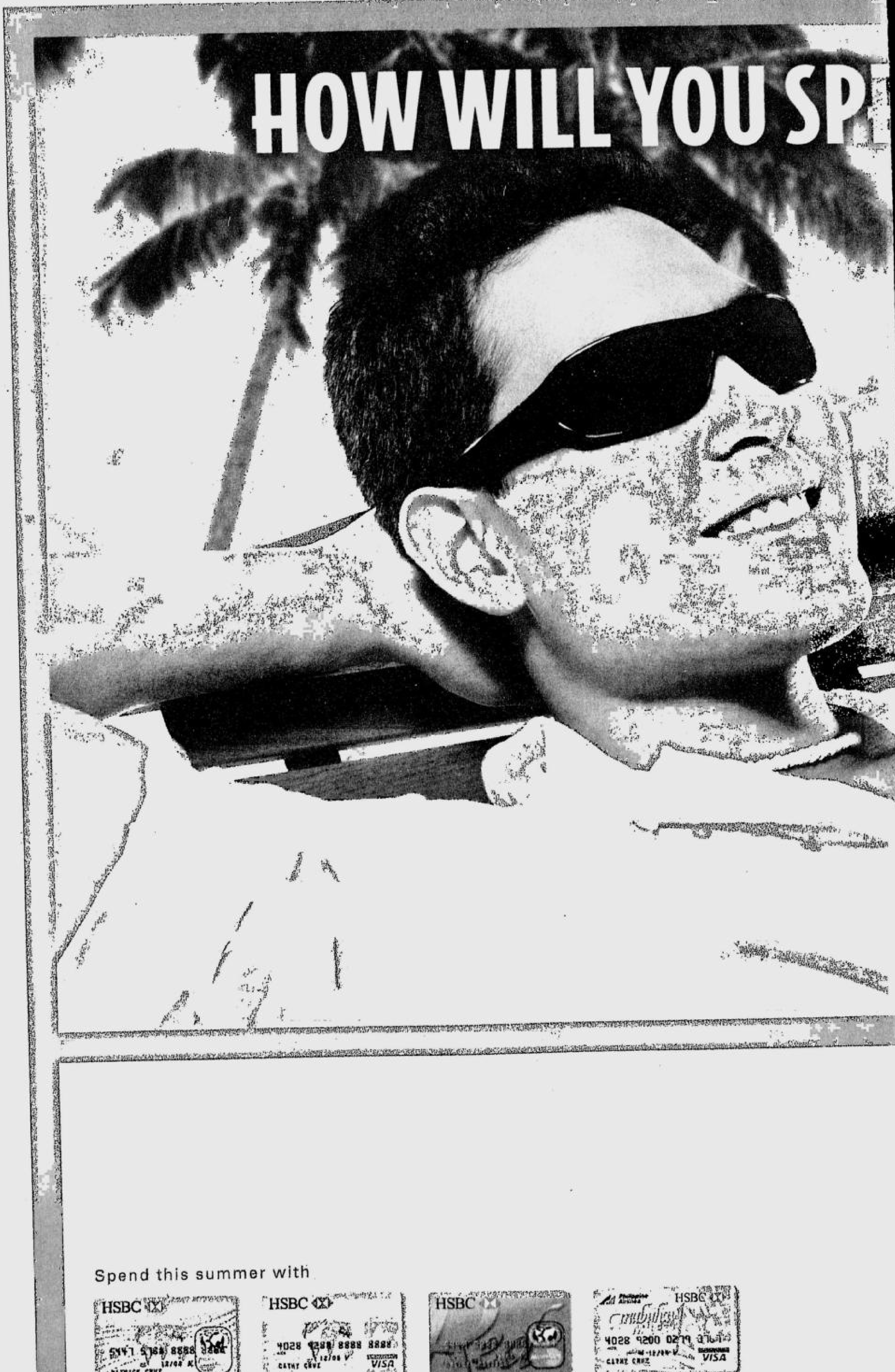
The parents want the court to annul the September 13, 2005 stay order of Judge Romeo F. Barza, particularly the portion suspending payments to plan holders.

Another December 16, 2005 order from Barza granted CAP's petition for rehabilitation and required the policyholders to wait eight years before collecting payments on their plans.

The petitioners said the lower court's ruling should be declared null and void because it lumped the pre-need plan holders with the company's creditors.

The policyholders also asked the SC to nullify the appointment of Mamerto A. Marcelo, Jr. as receiver in the CAP rehabilitation.

Armand N. Nocum



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Miriam comes to Nene's defense

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO PImentel Jr., who decried the showing of a Malacañang-produced documentary portraying him as an "enemy of the state," has found an ally in administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Rushing to Pimentel's defense, Santiago yesterday cautioned administration officials and the Armed Forces against implicating people in coup plots simply because they were vocal critics of the administration.

"I am of the belief and conviction from personal knowledge that he will never cabal against the President. Conceivably the worst that can be said against the senator is that he is the President's most vocal critic," she said in a statement.

Santiago, a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said Pimentel was merely exercising freedom of speech and his attacks on the Arroyo administration did not constitute "clear and present danger" to the State.

"I believe that Malacañang officials would be well-guided if they would bear in mind that they absolutely have no authority to limit or restrain the constitutionally protected freedom of speech," she said.

An angry Pimentel denounced the documentary, "Paglaban sa Kataksilan: 1017," in a privilege speech Tuesday and demanded that Malacañang apologize to him and stop showing the video on government television.

The documentary, which details an alleged plot by military and communist rebels and the opposition to topple the Arroyo administration, shows Pimentel laughing at the foot of the Ninoy Aquino monument in Makati City.

Asked to comment on Pimentel's protest, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the opposition leader could take the matter to court if he felt aggrieved by the video.

"He's a seasoned politician," Bunye added. "He should be able to take as much as … he dishes out."

Bunye said he had no hand in the documentary's production but added, "We stand by the information given by the armed forces."

In her statement, Santiago stressed that free speech was a "constitutionally protected right" and any law passed by Congress to limit this would lose the "presumption of constitutionality."

"The state can limit free speech only if the speech presents clear and present danger to national security," she said.

For a speech to meet the test of clear and present danger, the speaker or writer should incite his audience to lawless action, such as taking up arms against the government, or resorting to violence, intimidation, threat, strategy or stealth to overthrow it, she said. On top of this, the audience must have reached the tipping point where it would be ready to take lawless action as a result of the incitement, she added.

"I do not believe that in the case of Senator Pimentel, these two features are present. He has never, as far as I know, incited to taking up arms which is the key feature of rebellion under the Penal Code," Santiago said. *With a report from Christine O Avendaño*

Looking for another Magsaysay

By Reynaldo Pacheco

(The writer is president of Ang Kapatiran, a platform-based party seeking to reform the Philippine political landscape.)

SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE Philippines has been led by a few truly exceptional, larger-than-life figures. One stands out: Ramon Magsaysay.

He served as Philippine President for only three and a half years in the 1950s, took the country up a long, tough trail, in the process defeating a Huk rebellion, forging strong international alliances and establishing a reputation for incorruptible governance.

Magsaysay's integrity was his hallmark.

Famous and respected

By the time he died 59 years ago today—on March 17, 1957—in a plane crash, he had become one of the most famous and respected leaders in Asia.

Notes historian Carlos Quirino:

"No public figure—not even Dr. Jose Rizal, acclaimed as the greatest hero of the Philippines, or Andres Bonifacio with his plebeian origin, or Manuel L. Quezon, the political wizard of his era—has aroused among Filipinos the same fanatical enthusiasm that Magsaysay did."

Sad to say, most of the national leaders who followed Magsaysay have undone his magnificent work. Some of them, more notorious than others, have done so by stealing, rewarding friends, jailing enemies and generally debasing the national currency and character.

Annual prize

Sadly, today, few Filipinos remember Magsaysay. Very few people know what he stood for.

A famous annual prize awarded to those who do worthy deeds is named after him, but that's about all.

One of the greatest Asians, he has slipped from our national consciousness.

This is a great pity, for it is to Magsaysay that we owe so much more, and it is to him that we should turn for example. It is his spirit that we should invoke in these troubled times.

Magsaysay had his own personal credo, a set of 10 core values that dominated and guided his life. Three of them have particular resonance today:

"I believe that the little man is fundamentally entitled to a little bit more food in his stomach, a little bit more cloth on his back and a little more roof over his head.

"I believe that a high and unwavering sense of morality should pervade all spheres of government activity.

Set example

"I believe that the President should set the example of a big heart, an honest mind, sound instincts, the virtue of healthy impatience and an abiding love for the common man."

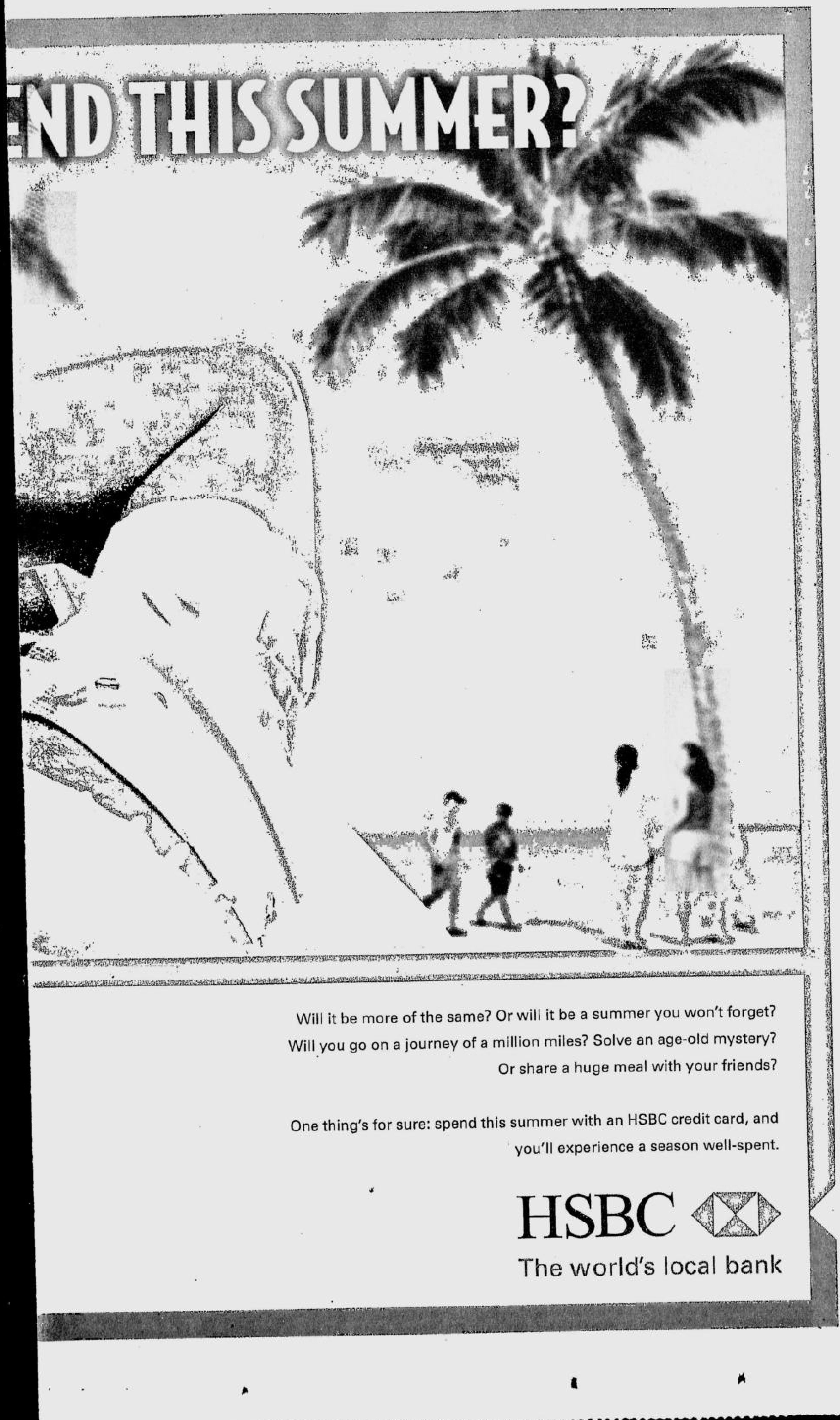
The Philippines today is badly in need of men and women in the Magsaysay mold, not officials whose credos go no further than their bank accounts.

This is why Ang Kapatiran, a new national political party registered with the Commission on Elections, is on a nationwide search for servant leaders.

Ang Kapatiran is looking for Filipino citizens who value,virtue, duty, good citizenship, transparency and public accountability.

With its platform of clear and specific policy objectives, Ang Kapatiran aims to wipe clean the political slate, to change the political landscape for all time.

In short, we are looking for a new set of men and women, who, like Ramon Magsaysay, believe that government starts at the bottom and moves upward. We invite them to step forward. Now!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OPINION

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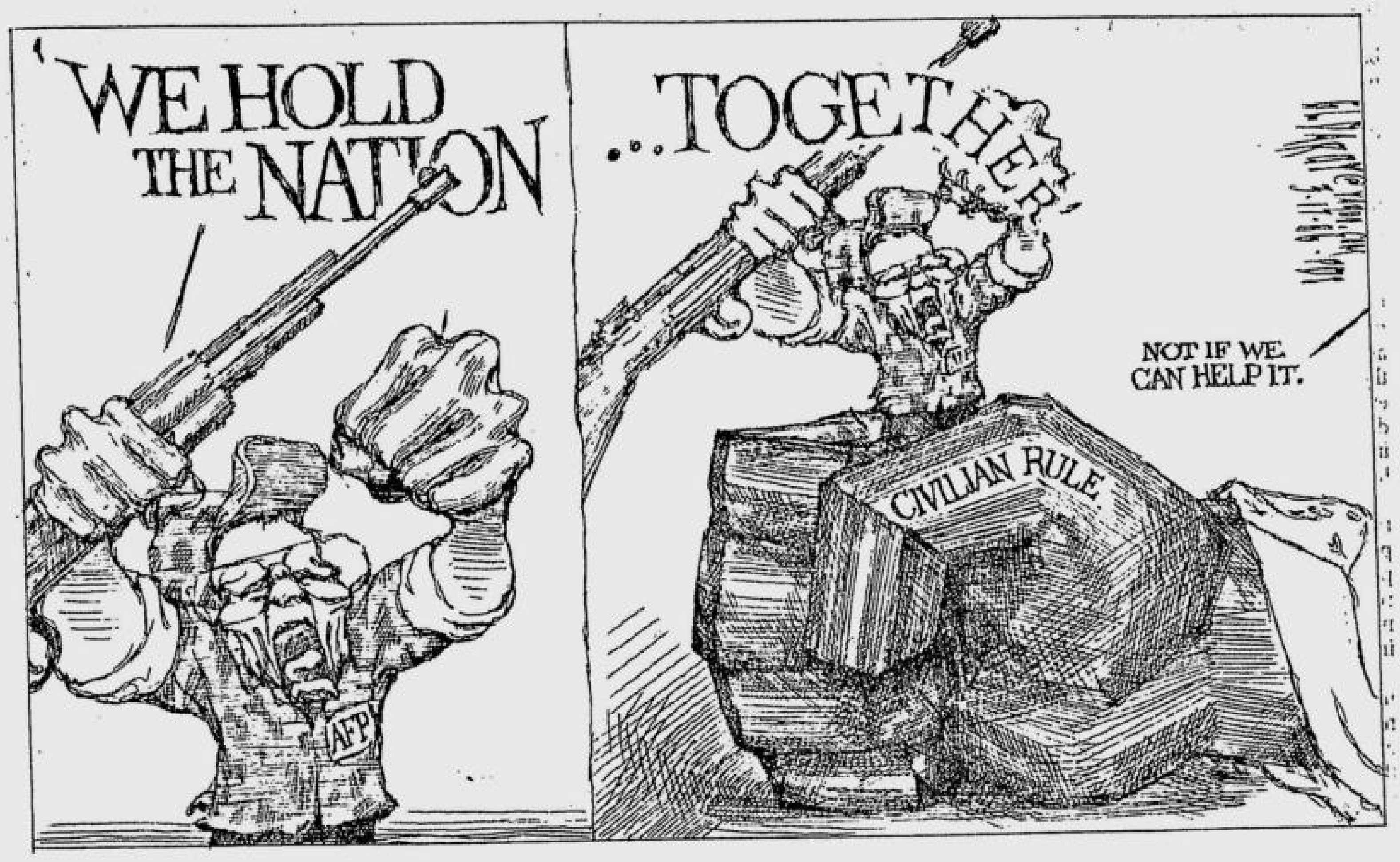

Deadly candor

EDITORIAL

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A CASE OF TOO DEADLY CANdor when the military spokesperson, Col. Tristan Kison, said that the Armed Forces of the Philippines was "one of the strong pillars holding the nation" and that "if we break, the nation will collapse." The claim borders on the messianic and the megalomaniacal. It would have been all right had the statement come from a demented person. But coming from the spokesperson of the foremost state instrumentality of power, armed to the teeth and with a dark history of politicization and corruption owing to martial law, the statement is alarming and sounds much like a sly challenge to the foremost principle of republican democracy: civilian authority over the military.

There may be no gainsaying the loyalty of the military brass and rank and file to the chain of command. This has been proven in recent events in which they held themselves together despite apparent tempting offers to engage in adventurism. It could be that there have been invitations from politicians and businessmen for the military to intervene in the current political crisis, but the officers and soldiers by and large have held together. There's a quiet plea on the part of the top brass for politicians to leave the soldiery alone. And the plea should be heeded and respected.

But soldiers should not get funny ideas. They may be a linchpin as far as popular revolts and insurrections are concerned (that seems the lesson of the two Edsa revolutions), but it doesn't mean that they can play god.

Judging from its recent actions and pronouncements, the AFP seems to be flexing its muscles at the cost of civilian supremacy and civil liberties. How could one explain, for example, the threat of the AFP spokesperson to sue this paper for publishing stories on what happened behind the scenes at the height of the attempted coup? And the threat came after the same spokesperson denied there was indeed a coup!

Even lawmakers close to Malacañang, like Rep. Prospero Pichay, have told the military to shut up. And Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has pointed out that the military had no case since the press was only doing its job of reporting.

But the military remains adamant because Malacañang, the symbol of civilian power over the military, seems either to be egging it on or may be too weak to even protest. Even after Gonzalez had said that the military had no case, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that it is up to the military to file a case against this paper. As press officer of the commander in chief, Bunye could have hushed the military spokesperson and instructed him on the whys and wherefores of a free press. But he seems not to dare discipline the spokesperson of an agency that, after all, has an army and an armory.

And why should he? His boss—the commander in chief—had just gone on the air to berate what she called sensational and seditious reporting and to call for "responsible media outfits." Presumably she was making her statements in a station she perceived to be friendly—but lo and behold, the station recently asked the Senate to pass a law removing from the President the power to close down broadcast stations. Apparently, there's a consensus in the press that Malacañang and the military, that it supposedly controls, have become too threatening to the press regime at the cost of the press' prerogatives and its right to inform the public and its freedom of expression.

Even as it allows military spokesmen to shoot their mouth off freely and issue veiled threats or supercilious statements, Malacañang seems to have no appetite for balanced statements coming from its own officials on its emergency powers. Alfredo Benipayo has remained mum on his irrevocable resignation as solicitor general, but it surely is not just coincidence that Malacañang "accepted" his resignation after he made a nuanced defense of Proclamation 1017 at the Supreme Court, arguing that while there might have been flaws in its implementation, its legality is incontestable. This attempt at fine distinction seems unacceptable to Malacañang. Malacañang wants an absolute defense of 1017. It will take no prisoners. Its view is utterly supremacist.

Sadly, the civilian authority has taken on the military fatigue color as readily as a soldier trained to be a killing machine takes to the gun. The civilian authority is turning against itself and the people.

Gov't documentary 'Kataksilan' is libelous

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE ADMINISTRATION KEEPS SAYING THAT there should be "balance" in all media news reports, yet it is the one guilty of "unbalanced" reporting in its documentary "Paglaban sa Kataksilan 1017," which is being shown on all three government television networks (Channels 4, 9 and 13). Compact discs of the same documentary are being distributed all over the country.

I watched the docu twice, and I wondered why a government preaching "balance" in media would produce such a one-sided show. If it were produced or shown by a private media organization, it would be liable for libel, for it libels many prominent personalities, soldiers and civilians alike, accusing them of being coup plotters and subversives.

The docu narrates the alleged "conspiracy" among communists, soldiers and opposition politicians to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo and take over the government. Many prominent personalities were shown and named as among the "conspirators" but they were not allowed to give their side. Everything aired was the side of the administration. In law, this is a clear indication of malice, which is the most important element in the crime of libel.

Among journalists, "balance" is ingrained in their subconscious. It is a reflex action of any reporter or editor to look for the other side. If a reporter fails to do so, the editor tells him to get "the other side" of the story or his story is no good. "Balance" or reporting the other side is written in all the codes of ethics of journalists, so it is not necessary for anybody, least of all the government, to tell them that. Rather, it should tell that to government propagandists, such as those who made "Paglaban sa Kataksilan 1017." For the other side can easily make another docu, titled "Paglaban sa Kasinungalingan."

Since pro-government personalities are libel-happy anyway, the "Batasan 5" may as well give them a dose of their own medicine and file libel charges against the Malacañang propaganda arm and the three government channels for showing the docu.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. is justified in complaining that he has been libeled by being labeled as an "enemy of the state" in the docu. From a person who held the microphone for GMA while she took her oath of office as President at Edsa in 2001 to an "enemy of the state" is indeed a big comedown.

Enemy of the state? Not me, said Pimentel. "If there is an enemy of the state in this country, it is none other than that lady who is pretending to be the President of this country in Malacañang. She is the enemy of the state."

* * *

As if that were not enough, and the recall of Proclamation 1017 notwithstanding, Malacañang keeps threatening journalists with arrests and prosecution. In the latest threat, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye warned that "journalists would not be accorded any special treatment in the crackdown against those suspected to be engaged in destabilization."

As if journalists are expecting any special treatment! The Arroyo administration has already shown that it is worse than the Marcos martial law regime in trying to repress not only media but also the whole citizenry. So what special treatment can we journalists expect from it?

Nevertheless, I don't think the threats scare any journalist. To be arrested by this administration for telling the truth is a "badge of honor." And history will judge the actions of both the journalists and the administration that persecutes them.

And here's another contradiction: In still another threat intended to scare journalists, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that he was investigating the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) for violation of the anti-wiretapping law by posting on its website the "Hello Garci" tapes purporting to show that fraud marked the May 2004 presidential elections. (Why is the administration so touchy about the "Hello Garci" tapes? Why is it so afraid of them?)

But as the PCIJ pointed out, the same tapes had been played in Congress and by Bunye himself in Malacañang. So how can publishing it in its website be a violation of the law? Isn't that only factual reporting?

Sen. Ralph Recto cited still another contradiction: "To a large extent, this government rode on the coattails of the (PCIJ) exposés on the alleged Erap mansions," he said, referring to the series of PCIJ stories about the lifestyles of deposed President Erap and his mistresses. "Those in the opposition then were applauding the PCIJ's sleuthing. But now that they're in power, they would like to put in prison the very same people they once put on the pedestal."

The Arroyo administration is a beneficiary of the PCIJ's "intrepid reporting," Recto added. "But when the same journalistic standards that the PCIJ had adhered to through the years were used in scrutinizing the new government, those with new-found powers abhorred the exercise of a right they not long ago extolled."

Recto said that during Erap's time, Erap would merely throw a tantrum every time the PCIJ came out with an investigative story unflattering to his administration. "But (the Arroyo) administration (now) wants to throw the whole PCIJ staff in jail," he said.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Lawyer to witness: "Is it true you accepted a bribe of P1 million?"

Witness does not answer.

Judge: "Please answer the question."

Witness: "*Ay*, sorry, judge. I thought he was asking you."

Milosevic: A death unmourned

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

WHEN HISTORY'S VILLAINS DIE, WE GRIEVE that they didn't live long enough to be punished. Yet no punishment can really restore what they have taken from their victims' lives, and no penalty can match the pain they have caused. To top it all, to execute a war criminal is to shortchange ourselves twice. We dwarf justice by taking one miserable life to recompense for the loss of martyred thousands. Worse, we betray our ideals by proving ourselves capable of the inhumanity we so despise in the enemy.

When I took part in drafting the Rome Statute to establish the International Criminal Court, the list of crimes punishable by the court jarred one's trust in humanity. The macabre list aimed to capture the "state of the art" in new forms of indignities and assaults. The Philippine and Latin American contribution was "enforced disappearance"—"salvaging" for us, *desaparecidos* for the Americas. For us and other Asian countries, they added "sexual slavery" and "enforced prostitution," the lawyers' tortured attempt to capture the agony of the comfort women. For the Yugoslavian conflict, it was "forced pregnancy," where genocidal beasts, not satisfied with raping their victims, ensured that the victim gave birth to mixed-blood progeny, aiming at the eventual "cleansing" of the victims' bloodlines. It was sick and sickening.

Slobodan Milosevic, the "Butcher of the Balkans," masterminded and embodied that evil. He was the president of Yugoslavia when it launched its ethnic cleansing against breakaway Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. He was the first head of state called to answer for war crimes. He was indicted for the infamous 1995 slaughter of 8,000 Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica. He couldn't be arrested until he was voted out of office in 2001, and the successor government surrendered him to the tribunal. Upon his arrest, the prosecutor found a very thin dossier against him. Apparently investigators hadn't bothered to build the case because they had little hope that he would ever be arrested to stand trial.

Six days ago, he was found dead in his cell at the detention center of The Hague tribunal, apparently from natural causes. Sadly, the presentation of evidence by defense counsel had not been completed, endlessly delayed by Milosevic's own antics and delaying tactics, and the tribunal had to terminate the case without a verdict.

This brings us to the nagging issue: the limits of individual criminal justice to deter mass violations of human rights. Whereas before, the world preferred merely to chastise and shame countries, today we have invented institutions to run after the men and women who actually commit the evil deed.

We have created international courts to prevent impunity, run after the political leaders and military officers who serve as the henchmen for modern-day Hitlers, and punish individuals. We first applied this principle at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, saying that crimes are committed by individuals and it is these individuals who must be either punished or deterred. After Nuremberg, there was the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, and more recently, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) before whom Milosevic was indicted.

The death of Milosevic, however, tells us the limits of rectifying large-scale crimes through individual punishment. Death has thwarted justice, but even that justice was limited to start with. After all, Hitler couldn't have carried out his "Final Solution" all by himself, and needed the aid of "Hitler's Willing Executioners," as the title of the book calls the mass of civilians who stood quietly by as the Nazis went about their business.

Critics have called them "show trials," valuable for their symbolic rather than legal value. They provide catharsis and bring closure to painful periods in a nation's life. They give the victims' families a chance to vindicate their pain, by confirming their loss and affirming that the accused is wicked and the community indignant. But that purpose is "exemplary" (i.e., to make an example of the evil one), and at best "restorative" (i.e., to make the victim or his kin whole again), rather than "punitive" (i.e., to punish the guilty and make them pay).

The breakup of Yugoslavia and the assertiveness of the Serbs, the dominant ethnic group, should remind us that our peace is fragile, and that it doesn't take much for our civilized lives to unravel. It took a charismatic leader to unleash the genocidal monster lurking within each Serb nationalist, letting loose neighbor against neighbor, co-workers against each other. He was "both the pyromaniac and the fireman." "He creates disorder and …convince[s] people only he can resolve it."

In recent Asian history, Pol Pot holds the record closest to Milosevic's in exterminating entire populations. He too died before a court could convict him, indeed even before the Khmer Rouge tribunal could be set up, having been delayed by the maneuverings of local politicians linked to the old order. In Phnom Penh some time back, I saw a film depicting Pol Pot's last moments: the corpse of the once all-powerful ruler was ingloriously wrapped in blankets, then brought to a makeshift funeral pyre to be cremated in a backyard farm. No grand ceremony, none of the paeans that Brother Number One ritually heard while he reigned.

Such as things are, for Slobodan Milosevic, it is sentence enough to die "unloved, unwanted and unmourned," for how truly can he rest in peace? That should remind today's aspiring tyrants in our land: Power intoxicates but beware history's hangover.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

RP getting closer to a police state

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS, FOLLOWING the aborted Feb. 24 coup attempt, have put President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration in a total war mode with the Philippine media and its perceived enemies, including those on the military Right and on the Left.

Last Sunday, the President said she was still battling "residual" threats against the government. While reassuring the country that her government was "one step ahead of the enemies of the state," the President warned: "We are fully aware that some groups have not ceased in their attempts to undermine democracy." She then directed the police and the military "to expose all residual and anticipated threats of destabilization even as we push normalization."

The statement hardly reassured the public that the regime is in control of a restive military, although the coup has been nipped in the bud. There are concerns that, in the aftermath of the lifting of the state of national emergency, the military has emerged as the main threat to constitutional democracy and that the government has increasingly become hostage to the military which has enhanced its veto power during the emergency.

There is heightened concern in civil society that after the government resorted to emergency powers, it has become necessary for it to keep in place the mechanisms of police power to ensure regime survival. Thus, the country has now moved dangerously close to the threshold of being a police state, or a military dictatorship.

As the President renewed her warning to the media to exercise "responsibility" in reporting news on coups, a new threat to the media emerged from the military. The spokesperson of the Armed Forces denounced post-coup newspaper reporting that pictured the military in a state of disarray, with the involvement of some of its senior officers in the plot to overthrow the government, in an alleged conspiracy with the leftists and mainstream opposition politicians seeking to install a "transition council"—a euphemism for a civilian-military junta—to run the country in case the President was toppled on Feb. 24.

The media are even more nervous about the continuing crackdown than they were on Feb. 24, when Proclamation 1017 was issued. These fears were heightened by threats aired by the military that it would file either criminal libel or sedition charges against sections of the press for publishing reports that "portrayed a different story compared to those that actually and truthfully transpired within the AFP in the days prior to the declaration of a state of national emergency." The military spokesperson not only denounced as "without basis" newspaper reports that the coup plotters sought to replace Ms Arroyo with a caretaker government to be headed by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga. The spokesperson also charged that the series of articles were part of the plot by "unseen hands and puppet masters ... to divide the military" in an attempt to oust Ms Arroyo.

With this intervention, the media now face two enemies: the government and the military, which have coalesced to gang up on the media.

The double-barreled threat was magnified the other day when Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters that his office was investigating the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism for possible violation of the anti-wiretapping law when it posted on its website the Garcillano tapes that purported to show fraud in the May 2004 election. Gonzalez also said that the government had a watch list of journalists engaged in "seditious" activities.

At the Senate hearing last Tuesday on the harassment of journalists and curtailment of press freedom, PCIJ officials revealed that the police last Monday tried, but failed, to obtain search warrants from a Quezon City regional trial court. The warrants would have allowed the police to raid and search offices of the PCIJ to collect evidence to support charges of inciting to sedition.

The government stepped up its continuing post-coup pressure on the press with the warning made by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye that journalists would not receive "special treatment." In a mealy-mouthed double-speak, Bunye said that while the government would honor the basic rights of the press, "the press is not a target of censorship, but some members of the press have been charged with violations of the law and shall be prosecuted just like any ordinary citizen."

The statement is gratuitous and misrepresents press attitudes toward cases filed against its members. Historically, the press has never sought special treatment from the courts. Its members have submitted to judicial process in cases involving criminal libel complaints, as well as those involving political offenses relating to national security. The brief of the press is that the constitutional rights of its members to exercise their freedoms be respected by government. It seeks no more than this.

In being critical of the government, the press does not seek and expect concessions from the government. Too often, the exercise of this right is mistaken as involvement in seditious acts. The line separating criticism of government actions from seditious activity against the state is extremely blurred. In this particular situation, the process becomes arbitrary, with the government seizing the initiative in determining what is responsible and irresponsible journalism, and what is seditious or not.

'Moral lynching' and indifference

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT SEEMS WE'RE STILL NOT THROUGH WITH the little tempest in a teapot raised over the "middle-class response" to the anti-GMA protests. Enteng Romano of the Black and White Movement wrote a response to two letters that had been circulating in various e-groups critical of the anti-GMA movement and when I reprinted excerpts of Romano's letter in this space, Bong Austero, a friend of mine who happened to be the author of one of the letters, wrote me to explain how his original letter came to be.

Now Bong's response has triggered responses in kind, two of which, one from Dr. Eugene Pulmano of New Jersey and another from Jan Joseph Andrade (jjandrade72@yahoo.com), I reprint below. Both letters have been edited for brevity. I'm also putting an end to this exchange, though nothing can stop the parties involved from continuing it electronically.

Pulmano's response follows.

***

FIRST, Mr. Austero is quite adept at manipulating language to serve his purposes. I refer to his use of "moral lynching." It is not that he simply stumbled on this phrase. It's possibly quite deliberate. He wants to conjure the imagery of physical lynching as we know it: putting a rope around a man's neck, hanging and jerking up on a tree until the man's neck snaps ... Or, tying a man's feet, connecting him to a truck and dragging him in the street or open field. The idea is to evoke revulsion at such barbarity.

Nice try, but this doesn't hold water. This is the pitfall of arguing by analogy.

The critics (myself included) of GMA are, for the most part, after truth and justice. But such efforts are frustrated at every turn. In normal circumstances and in law, the burden of proof falls on the accuser. However, if the accused uses the full machinery of the government to block the search for truth within the parameters of law and the Constitution, it's not unreasonable to assume that the accused has something to hide, if not guilty. In this instance, the burden of proof, to my mind, falls on the accused to prove her innocence.

Second, Austero's threshold for truth and justice must indeed be very high. The evidence for cheating, stealing and lying is staring him in the face, but (he) still refuses to believe. If this critical mass of evidence doesn't quite convince him, nothing will. He pivots on this issue by pointing out to other *trapos*. For sure many of these *trapos*, including those in the opposition, have indulged in similar practices. But these are not the issues at the moment. The issue is GMA.

Finally, man is not only a political, social, economic animal; he's first and foremost a moral man.

***

HERE'S Andrade's piece:

"I never like to be lied to by a girlfriend or agent and certainly not the president ...." That's not me talking about Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, that's Burt Bacharach talking about US President George W. Bush.

S.C. Austero and his kind blame the reaction but not the stimulus. They see everything wrong in the effect but not in the cause. They're.... people complaining about a tree's dying but not caring that its roots are rotting.

Obviously, Austero doesn't mind being lied to or made a fool by his president. And he is angry at those who mind and stubbornly insist that his president should be held accountable for lying, cheating and stealing. When criticized for being indifferent, he lashes back at the critics, accusing them in effect of "moral bigotry." And the more he sees red because the "moral bigots" around him are not only criticizing them but also obstructing the traffic and, more irksomely, his march to a great future.

(Rarely have I) come across so eloquent a pitch for indifference... give it to Austero, he can be so eloquent when so angry.

I'm angry, too. Well, unlike him I'm not middle-class. I used to be, although I work in a private company, with a salary equal to, if not more than, that of the generals and Cabinet members. But I am hard-up these days. I have barely enough to feed my family, send three children to school and pay for my house rent. Unlike Austero, I am wallowing in debt, having effectively loaned the retirement benefits that I have yet to receive just to provide my family a decent existence. With barely enough to sustain my family, I am forced to live a life of austerity (no pun intended) bordering on poverty. No, I'm not angry at Austero. I'm angry about all the lying, cheating, stealing and, now, the fascism of his president.

Let him live his life and sleep the sleep of the blind, deaf and dumb. But, please, tell him not to tell me (or threaten me or violently stop me, as his president's minions are doing) from going to the streets to fight for the truth, to protest lying, cheating and stealing by an impostor in government, to oppose oppression because it is hindering a great future of peace for him.

And please tell him not to stop me from thinking and saying he's a fool for allowing his president to make him a fool. This is my right, although he and his president may think otherwise.

Let me refer him to the words of Elie Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Prize winner: "Two subjects. We fight hatred. There should be a biblical commandment: 'Thou shall not hate.' And then there is indifference. Everyone can fall into this trap. It's so easy to enter into indifference and stay there. An indifferent person remains indifferent unless shaken up." I hope this shakes him up.

I have an unsolicited word of counsel for him, if he cares to listen. He does not have to sleep and play blind, deaf and dumb to achieve the kind of peace he envisions. It is already within his reach. He can find it in North Korea and Cuba and China.

The crisis of Thai democracy

WORLD VIEW

Thitinan Pongsudhirak

ONE YEAR AFTER HE WAS REELECTED IN A landslide, Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has been forced to dissolve the National Assembly and call a snap election. Although his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party commands a 75 percent majority in the assembly, Thaksin is embattled. He remains immensely popular with rural voters and the urban poor, who comprise more than 60 percent of Thailand's electorate, but he has been battling a fervent Bangkok-based insurrection against his rule by the intelligentsia and middle classes.

They accuse Thaksin, Thailand's wealthiest businessman, of corruption and treason for the tax-free sale of his family owned Shin Corp. to the Singapore government's Temasek Holdings for $1.9 billion.

Thaksin's rapid reversal of political fortune attests to the limits of the ballot box, as well as to democratic shortcomings that now beset a host of developing countries, including regional neighbors such as the Philippines.

Until recently, Thaksin appeared to be as unassailable at home as he was bold and credible abroad. Exploiting Thailand's deep urban-rural divide, Thaksin bulldozed his way to power in 2001 on a populist platform. He stirred up national pride and promised rural Thais that their country would rise to greatness following the devastating 1997 economic crisis.

A raft of populist policies underpinned his first four-year government—from rural debt suspension and cheap universal health care to handing out $25,000 to each of 77,000 villages for entrepreneurial start-up funds. Reminiscent of development strategies prevalent in East Asia, Thaksin picked strategic niche industries to propel Thailand's economic expansion, focusing on automobiles, fashion, food, health care and tourism.

In foreign affairs, Thaksin carved out his own space on the international stage with ambitious regional cooperation schemes anchored around the 25-member Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the Ayeyawady Chao Phraya Mekong Economic Cooperation (ACMECS) and a clutch of bilateral free-trade agreements with the major powers, including the United States, China, Japan, India and Australia. The ACD was designed to make Thailand the political center of gravity in Southeast Asia; ACMECS was to make it the region's linchpin of economic development; and the bilateral agreements would cement relations with the biggest players in the region.

At his zenith, many saw Thaksin as a worthy successor to former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, buoyed by authoritarian rule at home and assertive leadership abroad. Voters overwhelmingly returned Thaksin to office in February 2005. But his personal popularity then plummeted, owing to the spate of separatist violence in the Muslim-dominated south and the scourge of corruption. Sins overlooked during his first term—from harassment of the media and coercion of civil society groups to extrajudicial killings in an anti-drug campaign and conflicts of interest that benefited his Shinawatra telecommunications empire—soon caught up with him.

The shady sale of Shin Corp. in February galvanized long-simmering discontents. The deal was viewed as the epitome of Thaksin's sophisticated corruption and a betrayal of his proclaimed nationalism, thus exhausting his moral authority and political legitimacy. The company's value quadrupled during Thaksin's reign, with assets such as satellites, a mobile phone service and an airline having originated from state concessions that were conditioned on majority Thai ownership. For Thaksin's opponents, the sale of these assets to a foreign company owned by a foreign government amounted to putting Thailand's economic sovereignty on the block.

Thaksin's days appear numbered, for Thailand seems poised to eject a popularly elected prime minister. The number of street protesters has swelled from five digits to six. His predicament illustrates the common dictum in the politics of developing countries where rural electorates elect governments but urban elites get to throw them out.

Indeed, the anti-Thaksin coalition will settle for no less than his ouster from office, permanent banishment from Thai politics, and possibly exile. But the opposition has decided to boycott the snap election, which the TRT would likely win again by a large margin, because Thaksin has captured and manipulated the institutions established by the constitution to safeguard against graft and uphold separation of powers within the state.

Thai politics has thus reached an impasse. Only intervention by King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who is widely revered, seems capable of saving the day.

In a fiercely contested battle between Thaksin and his opponents, King Bhumibol is the fundamental difference between Thailand and the Philippines, where "people power" revolts regularly undermine and sometimes overthrow presidents. The King's intervention would put an unconditional stop to the street confrontations.

But the Thai people cannot afford to look to their aging and ailing King every time they have a problem. Moreover, a royal intervention would risk returning Thailand to square one, seeking to rewrite its constitution to remedy the shortfalls of its democratic culture.

What Thai democracy needs in order to mature is not a political safety net, but a vigilant citizenry to ensure disciplined enforcement of the constitution's provisions and institutions, so that they can no longer be hijacked by the likes of a Thaksin.

Project Syndicate

Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, is currently a visiting research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

Why Filipino (2)

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I'M HERE IN CEBU WHERE, EARLIER THIS MORNING, I met Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, who mentioned that they needed to produce health education materials in different local languages. I was surprised and asked, "But isn't Aurora a Tagalog province?" The governor had to explain that the province now has numerous migrants, mainly Ilocano, but now also including people from as far as the Visayas.

That conversation highlighted just one of the many problems that come from our lack of a national language. Even worse, we seem to be moving backwards, what with the recent Department of Education findings that high school seniors' proficiency in Filipino drastically dropped over the last few years.

Last Wednesday, I looked into our long history of neglecting the development of a national language. We seem to associate Filipino and our other languages with poverty and backwardness. Accompanying this linguistic inferiority complex is an over-valuation of English, which we think provides the key to national development, mainly to export more Filipino workers.

I'd question that assumption, and argue that our neglect of Filipino and our unrealistic expectations of English decrease our competitiveness in the global market.

Nationalism

Our more economically developed neighbors rightly recognize the need to balance nationalism with globalism, and this is reflected in their language policies. In the post-colonial period after World War II, many developing countries pushed hard to craft a national language.

Some countries, like Thailand, were more fortunate because they already had a common language spoken by most of its citizens. Others, like Indonesia and the Philippines, had a more daunting task because of great linguistic diversity. Indonesia was, however, able to develop Bahasa Indonesia while we lagged behind in our development of Filipino.

Some of the reasons for a national language were quite practical: you needed a common language for education, public health, agriculture, industry.

But the most important reason for developing a national language was that of developing a national identity that transcended class, caste, ethnicity, religion. It was importtant to have a common language to tell the story of a nation, and pass this from one generation to another. And, with time, our neighbors began as well to develop fine literature, written in the national language, capturing the dynamism, the exuberance, as well as the anguish and angst, of national life.

Globalism

A nationalistic policy toward language did not mean xenophobia. Japanese, for example, is peppered with borrowed English words, from home furnishings to high-tech jargon. The Chinese, on the other hand, drew on existing words to describe the wonders of the new technologies: the train is a "fire horse," a computer an "electric brain."

Gradually, our neighbors began to use their national language to open the world to their citizens. Visit bookstores in China, Indonesia or Thailand, and you'll find hundreds of books—the world's finest literature, as well as computer manuals, self-improvement books, textbooks in the social and natural sciences—translated into the local national language.

These countries have come to accept the importance of English and other languages of the world and encourage citizens to learn these languages, through their national language. In a Thai bookstore, you'll find Thai-English, Thai-Japanese, Thai-Chinese, Thai-French dictionaries, to name a few, both in book and electronic forms, the latter with speech synthesizers so you hear the proper pronunciation of foreign words.

Again, the reasons for doing this are very utilitarian: you learn a foreign language not because it's required but because it serves a purpose, often related to national development. So when the Chinese learn English, it's to be able to read the original technical books, or to communicate with visiting technicians. Their goal is to plug into the world to reap its benefits for the home country.

No wonder the West is running scared—the Japanese did it, the Chinese are doing it now, using just enough English (or German, or French) to learn new skills and technologies, which they then copy, often with great improvements.

Talking back

What's happening in the Philippines? We've neglected Filipino and our other languages. Only recently did we recognize that maybe the way to go in schools is to have the local language (e.g., Cebuano) used in the first years of primary school to teach Filipino and other basic subjects, including, for older kids, English.

And even as we laughed at our neighbors for their resistance to English, our own proficiency in that language has stagnated. I often suspect we're not actually seeing a deterioration of English in the Philippines. What's happened is that for most Filipinos, the level of English has remained pretty much the same from the colonial period, just enough to understand the instructions of the boss. Which is why we had such a perfect fit for a particular segment of the overseas labor market.

Now that new opportunities are emerging, such as in the call centers, we're realizing we don't have enough Filipinos who can speak English in a more interactive way, offering information and advice. And when it comes to the most lucrative high-paying jobs and consultancies, we have only a handful of Filipinos who have the ability to analyze problems in English, and to propose and explain solutions.

To capture that market, it won't be enough to just learn English. Filipinos have to be able to use the language spoken at home and bring this to tackle the complexities of the outside world. But since we neglected both Filipino and English in our schools, we have many young Filipinos who just can't communicate.

I despair over the way UP students grapple for words: "*Kasi*, sir, you know, the *ano* of the *ano* is, well, you know it's all very complex." Alas, at the rate we're going, we won't need English or Tagalog. We'll need to teach mind-reading in schools.

Proficient neither in Filipino nor English, our worlds will remain limited. We will continue to export Filipinos, but mainly in low-paying service occupations. At home, we suffer too from not being able to develop science and technology, so we end up buying other countries' consumer products.

As we search for solutions to our national aphasia, we might heed the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, who once said Indians have to learn Hindi to speak with each other, and English to speak to the world. I would say we should go for as many languages as possible so we can discover the world, but meantime, let's develop our own languages, too, and our sense of identity, so we can indeed speak with the world, and not just be spoken to. It all boils down to a simple matter of respecting ourselves, so that when the world talks to us, we can talk back.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Even a Grade I pupil knows the meaning of 'best'

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO SAID THAT SHE is the "best President" at this time for 84 million Filipinos. What made her say that, I wonder?

A Grade I pupil would know what "best" means. Somebody who is best would not steal, would not lie and would not arrest people without a reason.

The "best President" would not steal. The Senate agriculture and the blue ribbon committees have concluded that President Arroyo should be made accountable for the "premeditated, systematic and agricultural theft" of the P728-million fertilizer fund. This fund was released just before the 2004 elections and is believed to have been diverted to ensure Ms Arroyo's electoral victory.

The "best President" would not lie. Ms Arroyo's lawyer, Jesus Santos, denied that First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo ever went to Marawi City during the 2004 elections with P500 million. A senior Marine officer said that's a lie. Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani testified before a Senate committee that Mike Arroyo went to Marawi City and distributed funds to election officials in 2004. The Marines should know since they provided Mr. Arroyo security.

And what about the Garci tapes?

The "best President" would not arrest people without reason. After issuing Proclamation 1017, Ms Arroyo ordered the arrest of Rep. Crispin Beltran on a 1985 charge. President Cory Aquino released all political prisoners after Edsa 1986 and ordered the dismissal of politically motivated cases against anti-Marcos activists. Thus, there is no more ground for the arrest and detention of Beltran now.

I assume a Grade I pupil would wonder why Ms Arroyo calls herself the "best president" for our country in this time of crisis.

—AURORA A. PARONG, M.D.,
former executive director,
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines,
1101 H. Cortez, Sta. Lucia Village,
Wireless, Mandaue City

Who should be jailed?

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

CRISPIN BELTRAN, AGE 73, WAS ARRESTED and is detained by the police because of an old charge of "rebellion" that dates back 20 years. Imelda Marcos, on the other hand, has never been arrested or thrown in jail for the crimes she has been accused of. She even rubs elbows with the President. There were those who say that she will never see the inside of a jail cell because of her age. Between Beltran and Marcos, shouldn't the latter be the one in jail?—**Trennie Monsod, Quezon City (via e-mail)**

* * *

I think Mike Defensor got it right when he suggested that the way to settle the Liberal Party squabble would be to have a new election. This is indeed a brilliant idea, since this will forever settle any dispute as to who the real leader is in the Liberal Party and avoid skirmishes in and outside of the courtroom.

Now, I would like Defensor, following the same line of reasoning, to suggest to the President the same solution for all the squabbles going on in the country. An election should be called at once to settle the issue of leadership.

As it is, GMA cannot concentrate because she is busy defending the legitimacy of her presidency.—**Teck Uy, Canada (via e-mail)**

* * *

I hope I'm not the only one who is in favor of Proclamation 1017. Ever wonder why the peso was almost gaining 20 centavos a day but gained only 4 centavos the day the proclamation was lifted? Ever wonder why the stock market continued to gain points during the same week, only to drop some points that Friday?

No matter what the economists say, Proclamation 1017 gained the trust of investors. It showed that we have a President that can handle every possible situation.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not pro-administration. I am pro-reason and sensibility. It's about time someone imposed a little restriction on our freedom—freedom that is abused by a lot of people, especially the politicians who claim to be "for the people" and irresponsible journalists who claim to expose the truth. (Tell me, does anyone know the real truth?)—**Paul Santos, Parañaque City (via e-mail)**

* * *

When my students at Ateneo watched "Batas Militar" last week, from their very own lips came these observations: that both President Marcos and President Macapagal-Arroyo were bent on moving to a parliamentary system of government; that both presidents were hiding their draconian measures under the cloak of the Constitution; that both presidents were trampling on civil liberties; that both presidents were muzzling the media.

Like in Rizal's prologue to the magnificent "Noli Me Tangere," the shroud covering the face has fallen and revealed Ms Arroyo as she really is. With no mandate from the people because she cheated in the last election and with the world crumbling around her, she is resorting to the tactics of the desperate. In the end, she is shown for what she really is: a woman without power because empty and hollow, filled with nothing else but straw.'

Again and again, in our classes in Drama, we remind the students of what the Greek dramatists said: "They whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad."—**Danton R. Remoto (via e-mail)**

* * *

It is time for unity for the good of the Filipino people. Stop attacking the government. Give GMA a chance!

Kami rito sa ibang bansa, nagtatrabaho kahit lumiliit ang kita namin dahil sa paglakas ng peso. Kami'y nakikiisa para sa ikakaganda ng Pilipinas.—**Romeo L. Bordallo Jr., Kuwait (via e-mail)**

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Proimpeach gov sacked as RDC head

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO removed South Cotabato Gov. Daisy Avance-Fuentes as chair of the Regional Development Council (RDC) for Central Mindanao in a move that was seen as a retaliation for the governor's support of Ms Arroyo's impeachment.

Hadja Sittie Mariam Lim, director of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) in the region, said that in an order dated Jan. 25, Ms Arroyo named Koronadal City Mayor Fernando Miguel as the new RDC chair.

Lim said the President cited "presidential decision" for the change in the RDC leadership.

She said the order was only transmitted to her office on Feb. 22. Its implementation was delayed pending efforts to verify its authenticity.

Fuentes, who supported the impeachment move against Ms Arroyo, was named co-chair but she declined the position.

Fuentes said she was no longer surprised by the President's move to replace her as RDC chair.

She said the moment she and fellow National People's Coalition (NPC) stalwart South Cotabato Rep. Arthur Pingoy decided to support the impeachment move against Ms Arroyo, "we anticipated that we will have to pay for it."

"When I was called two years ago to lead the RDC, I accepted it and tried my best to deliver. Now that the President has decided that my time is up, then I should go. But I will still help the RDC as a member," she said.

Explaining her decision not to accept the council's co-chairmanship, Fuentes said she did not want to create confusion in the RDC.

"The co-chair position is intended for the representative of the private sector based on the rules governing the organizational structure of the RDCs in the country," she said.

The RDC is composed of representatives from government agencies, private groups and local chief executives of the provinces of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat and the cities of Cotabato, General Santos, Koronadal, Tacurong and Kidapawan.

Like other RDCs, its task is to draft proposals for the development of its member areas.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

KALINGA FEAST EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A child awaits his turn to take part in a performance during a recent festival in Lubuagan, Kalinga.

ROUNDUP

Army uniforms banned

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Police have banned the use of military uniforms among civilians in the province, saying crime suspects usually use these in their operations. Supt. Jane Binayug, Cagayan police information officer, said statements from crime or abuse victims showed that suspects behind robbery, burglary and murder cases usually use military uniforms so victims would think that they were government soldiers or policemen.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Catechist suffers landslide loss

SAN PABLO CITY—The Diocese of San Pablo here has extended its sympathies to its long-time catechist Juliet Gramatico, whose 21 relatives in Guinsaugon, Southern Leyte were among those missing and feared dead. Gramatico, a catechist of the San Vicente Ferrer Parish in Barangay Mamatid, Cabuyao, Laguna, said the victims included the families of two of her siblings. In a report to the Presbyterial council meeting, Fr. Bong Vega, parish priest of St. Bernard, was quoted as saying that Guinsaugon used to be an economically progressive village with three rice mills, big houses and a good number of motorcycles, cars and vans before it was buried in the landslide.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NPA member slain

LUCENA CITY—Government soldiers killed a suspected New People's Army rebel in an encounter in a remote village in Sta. Cruz town in Occidental Mindoro on Wednesday. A military report identified the slain communist guerrilla as a certain Ka Damon. "We have brought the body to the local police station for identification," Lt. Col. Elmer Quiroz, commander of the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion, said.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

1 dead in armed robbery

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—An employee of a courier company was killed while another was seriously wounded when four armed robbers in two motorcycles held them up and took P3 million in cash in Batangas City on Tuesday. Reynaldo Mendoza, an employee of the ARM Delivery Company, and his cousin, driver Romulo Mendoza, were in a van after withdrawing money from a bank when the suspects blocked their path in Barangay Banaba South at 3 p.m. The suspects, all armed with .45-cal. pistols, shot the victims repeatedly. Two of the gunmen entered the van and took the bag containing the money.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

DAR launches project

THE DEPARTMENT of Agrarian Reform recently launched a P5.3 million infrastructure project in Atok, Benguet. The DAR, through Undersecretary Gerundio Madueno, distributed 197 land titles to farmers in Poblacion and Caliking in Benguet.

Archivists hold workshop

THE SOCIETY of Filipino Archivists (SFA) Inc., in coordination with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), will hold a seminar-workshop on "Preservation Management: Setting Up a Preservation Program for Libraries and Archives" on April 3-5 at the Grand Menseng Hotel, Davao City. The venue of the workshop is in keeping with the NCCA's program of focusing training and development in Mindanao. For further information, please call Emma Rey (931-5966) or Emie Calonge (932-7195).

TREE SOLDIER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn (right) and Rear Adm. Tirso Danga, Western Command chief, plant a mangrove sapling to commemorate the Wescom's 36th anniversary recently.

Militants dare gov't: Arrest us

DAVAO CITY—MILITANT leaders here said they will face the government's crackdown against them head on even as eight of their leaders have been included in the charge sheet filed by operatives of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Manila Monday against Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador.

"The protest will continue even with the looming arrest. We will no be threatened by it and we will not hide ... we will face their attacks head on," said Ariel Casilao of Karapatan.

As if to show that they can not be silenced by any threat of arrest, various militant groups even staged a rally in front of the City Police Office here Tuesday.

Casilao said at least eight leaders of various militant groups have been tagged as conspirators of Virador in attempts to topple down the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Charged with conspiring to rebellion were Casilao, Editha "Inday" Duterte of Kadamay, Omar Bantayan of Kilusang Mayo Uno, Luz Ilagan of Gabriela (also a professor at the Ateneo de Davao University), Jeppie Ramada of Bayan Muna, Tonying Flores of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Cora Espinosa of Samakana, and Lorie Ann Cascaro of AnakBayan youth sector.

Virador was arrested by plainclothes operatives of the CIDG just as he was booking for a flight for Manila last month. Casilao said it was Virador who informed them about the inclusion of their names in the charge sheet.

During the protest in front of the police office, Supt. Jose Pante, CIDG commander for Davao, approached the group apparently to assure that no order of arrest has been transmitted to them yet from the national office. *Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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SCHEDULE OF PRODUCT PRESENTATIONS

Code	SEMINAR ROOM 1		Company Name
	March 16, 2006 (Thursday)		
A1	12:00nn - 12:45pm	Basic Hydraulic System & Seal Materials	Economos Phils. Inc.
A2	2:00pm - 2:45pm	Lower Your Operating Cost Thru Good Filtration Maintenance	Donaldson Filtration
A3	4:00pm - 4:45pm	Understanding Close- Loop Hydraulic System	Morse Hydraulic
	March 17, 2006 (Friday)		
B1	12:00nn - 1:45pm	ADDMIX- Ang Sekreto ng Mahusay na Kongkreto	ADDMIX-Bostix
B2	2:00pm - 2:45pm	An Exciting Journey Thru Total Solutions (Construction and Mining)	Atlas Copco
B3	3:00pm - 3:45pm	Custom Design Products for Oil & Gas Application	Atlas Copco
B4	4:00pm - 4:45pm	Safety in the Mining Industry	CIGI
	March 18, 2006 (Saturday)		
C1	12:00nn - 12:45pm	Geotechnical Solutions for the Mining Industry	Phil. Gabions Inc.
C2	2:00pm - 2:45pm	Wire Rope Basic	Wire Rope
	SEMINAR ROOM 2		
	March 16, 2006 (Thursday)		
D1	1:00pm - 1:45pm	The Name for Material Handling	Mhe- Demag (P) Inc.
D2	2:00pm - 2:45pm	Sizing: Its Role in Mineral Production	MMD Mineral Sizing (Europe) Limited
D3	3:00pm - 3:45pm	Shotcrete Technology	Elasto Plastics
D4	5:00pm - 5:45pm	Business Risks	Business Profiles
	March 17, 2006 (Friday)		
E1	1:00pm - 1:45pm	Introduction to Volvo EC700B Hydraulic Excavation	Civic Merchandising Inc.
E2	2:00pm - 2:45pm	New Product Presentation for Heavy Lift	Crosby Group Inc. with Benedicto Steel
E3	3:00pm - 3:45pm	INGAL Company & Product Presentation	Industrial Galvanizers Corp. of the Phils.
E4	4:00pm - 4:45pm	Introduction to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's)	Top Rigid Safety Supply Inc.
E5	5:00pm - 5:45pm	Using Belt Cleaning System in Belt Conveyors	Beta Equipment
	March 18, 2006 (Saturday)		
F1	1:00pm - 1:45pm	Varian Atomic Spectroscopy	Molave Trading
F2	3:00pm - 3:45pm	Bisazza: Endless Possibilities	Bisazza Phils.

ASIA MINING CONFERENCE
SEMINAR ROOM 3 March 18, 2006 (Saturday) 12:00nn - 4:00pm
TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AND PRESENTED
- Update on SNAP and other activities PMSEA to help in mining and nation building
- Update and status of 24 mining projects
- The state of Philippine Mining
- Role of Mining in Local Communities
- Nonmetals: Cement companies and ISO14001
- Grassroots acceptance of mining in host communities
- Mining as a profession and calling
- Opportunities in mining for Local & International contractors
- New Filtration Technology for the Mining Industry
- Opportunities for Contractors in Mining: The Philex Experience

CONSTRUCTION TECHNICAL SEMINARS
SEMINAR ROOM 3 March 16, 2006 (Thursday)
TOPIC A: 2:00pm - 4:00pm Impact of R-VAT on the Construction Industry by Atty. Vic Mamalateo (PCA Tax Consultant)
March 17, 2006 (Friday)
TOPIC B: 1:30pm - 3:30pm National Building Code & its Impact on the Construction Industry (by Arch. Manuel Cantupay)
TOPIC C: 4:00pm - 6:00pm A Symposium in PCA Rules and Regulation by Ramon Allado (PCA Board Member)
* All seat allocations are on a "first come, first serve basis". Attendees with payments will be given priority.*

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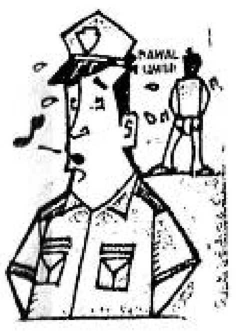

Urinating in public unlawful, but...

LEGAZPI CITY—Provincial Board member Ramon Fernandez Jr. has chided the city police force for failing to implement the ordinance of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Albay prohibiting urinating in public in this city.

In an inspection he conducted on Tuesday evening of the crowded food and drink stalls along Rosario and Vinzons Streets within the Albay Capitol Complex here, Fernandez found that a lot of male customers urinate along corners of nearby government buildings and dimly-lit streets.

Fernandez, who sponsored the ordinance, lamented that it was never enforced by the city police since it took effect on July 12, 1999.

Reminder

He said the provincial board even passed a resolution in October last year requesting the provincial director and police chiefs in Albay to enforce Ordinance No. 99-007, otherwise known as "An Ordinance Prohibiting All Persons from Urinating in All Public Places and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof," as a reminder.

Supt. Narciso Guarin, city police chief, claimed that the ordinance was defective since the provincial government can merely install toilets in strategic areas to address the problem.

Guarin was quoted by Fernandez as saying in a radio interview that his policemen would be placed in a bad light if they strictly enforced the ordinance.

"Who is he to declare an ordinance to be defective," Fernandez asked. "While we in the (provincial board) were elected to legislate and make laws, the police are mandated to enforce them (laws)."

The ordinance seeks to preserve the comfort and convenience of the Albayanos by maintaining clean air in public and private places, streets and surroundings.

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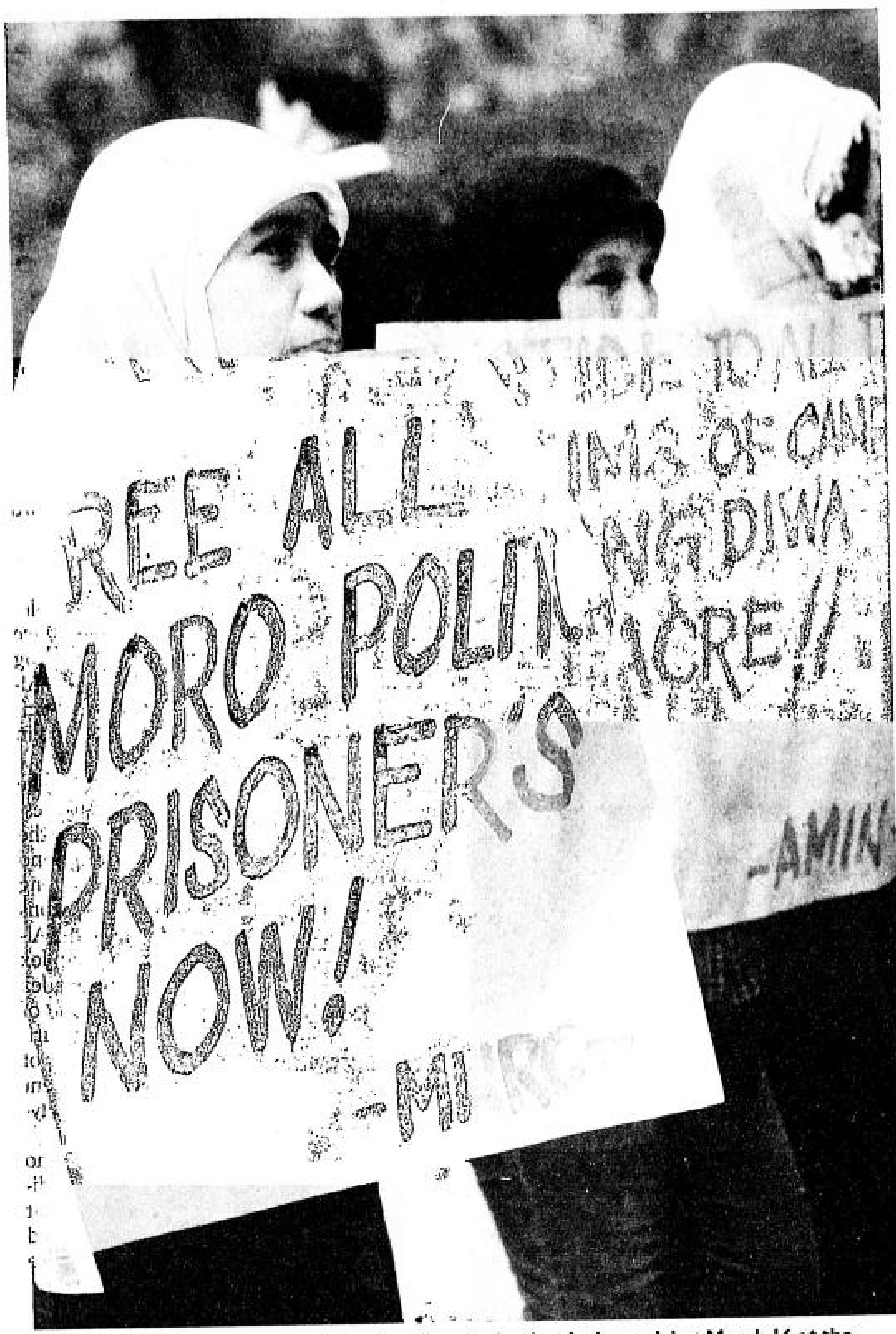
For the second offense, imprisonment of 10 days or a fine not exceeding P700 await offenders.

For the third offense, 20 days imprisonment or a fine not exceeding P1,000 or both, awaits offenders. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Muslim leaders urge release of Nur Misuari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MUSLIM women display their placards calling for justice during a picket March 16 at the office of the Human Rights Commission in Quezon City. The protesters were seeking justice for their relatives killed during an aborted jailbreak at a maximum prison facility led by suspected Abu Sayyaf members. PAT ROQUE/AP

COTABATO CITY—MUSLIM LEADERS in Mindanao, including a ranking official of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), reiterated an appeal to government for the immediate release of Moro National Liberation Front chair Nur Misuari, saying his freedom will boost government's peace venture in Mindanao.

Abdul Syed Lingga, executive director of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, said if the government cannot decide on Misuari's rebellion case, the former governor of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao should be allowed to post bail.

"The position of Muslims in Mindanao is that Misuari should be released. Justice delayed, justice denied. Until now, nothing's happened to the case of Misuari," Lingga said.

MNLF vice chair Hatimil Hassan, also ARMM Regional Legislative Assembly speaker, said lawmakers in the provinces of Maguindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-tawi, Lanao del Sur and Marawi City want Misuari out of jail.

MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said the organization still sees Misuari as one of the leaders of the Bangsamoro people.

"We are Muslims. We want that he will be freed from any harm. Misuari's freedom will also boost the ongoing peace talks," Iqbal said.

At the same time, Iqbal announced the resumption next week of the stalled talks.

"There is a signal already from Malaysia regarding the resumption of talks next week," Iqbal said.

"Both parties will discuss the implementing guidelines of the ancestral domain," he added.

Kuala Lumpur has postponed the resumption of formal peace talks due to recent political crisis in Manila.

In 1996, the government offered limited autonomy to the Moro National Liberation Front, in exchange for peace. But the MILF, which was formed from a disgruntled MNLF faction, said autonomy was insufficient.

Reports of a coup within its ranks recently hounded the MILF, with the brother of the late MILF leader Hashim Salamat being mentioned as the coup leader.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said Samir Hashim, the group's 108th Brigade commander, was recuperating from partial paralysis following a mild stroke last year.

"(So) there is no truth to that (coup attempt report)," Kabalu said.

Musanip Abdullah, commander of the MILF's 106th Brigade, earlier said that an attempt to overthrow MILF chair Ebrahim Murad was thwarted when he deployed his forces in Barangay Pidsandawan here a few days ago.

Abdullah, also known as Commander Adan, later said the move to unseat Murad turned out to be a false alarm.

Mike Mamintal, a member of the local ceasefire monitoring team, said the assembly by Commander Wahid Tundok's men in Pidsandawan was brought before the attention of the International Monitoring Team (IMT). Tundok is an ally of Hashim.

Mamintal said Tundok had told the IMT and local officials about a brewing territorial dispute between his group and Abdullah's forces in Barangay Kaya-Kaya in Datu Saudi Ampatuan town in Maguindanao.

Mamintal said Tundok claimed he wanted to express peacefully his people's sentiment. *Jeoffrey Maitem and Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

RP: From exporter of coffee to importer

TAGUM CITY, DAVAO DEL NORTE—From being coffee exporter in the 18th century, the Philippines has since become dependent on the import of the commodity for its brew.

The country has about 74,000 hectares of coffee plantations, but only 400 kilograms of coffee beans per hectare are being produced, a far cry from Vietnam's average of about 2,000 kilograms per hectare.

This is what Nestlé Philippine Inc. is trying to overturn.

Nestlé, which has recently launched a new coffee brand, has started a drive to revive the country's ailing coffee industry and boost production of the crop.

"We are practically doing everything we can to help the farmers," Glicerio Joel Lumagbas, head of Nestlé's agricultural services, said.

Lumagbas said one effort that Nestlé is doing is the holding of seminars to teach coffee farmers new technology on how to increase production. Currently, about 5,000 coffee stakeholders had attended the seminars, including the recent one conducted at the 16-hectare Nestlé Farm in Magdum Village here.

Cenon Alenton, Nestlé's resident agronomist here, said what they teach in the workshops are the modern and best farming and harvesting methods.

Most of the coffee farmers in the country, he said, do not have formal training and only rely on traditional methods.

"There is a lot of coffee demand," Lumagbas said of both domestic and global demands.

Richard Peñalosa, Nestlé's brand manager, said with Nestlé establishing buying stations around the country, farmers have been assured of a market for their produce. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Manila-Vigan flights planned

VIGAN CITY—THE SELDOM-USED AIRSTRIP in Barangay Mindoro here will soon be expanded as a local businessman is determined to set up the first Manila-Vigan flight for Ilocos Sur *balikbayan*.

Jose Singson Jr., the regional partner and franchisee of Asian Spirits here, said the flight will be considered once they can establish that there are as many *balikbayans* coming from Ilocos Sur as there are in Ilocos Norte.

Asian Spirits on Feb. 21 revived the Manila-Laoag-Manila route after Philippine Airlines withdrew following a quarrel between an airline official and a local politician.

Asian Spirits flies to Laoag and back to Manila every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Asian Spirits Executive Vice President Joaquin Po said they decided to keep the original schedule of PAL so that the passengers, who are making the connecting flight from Hawaii and the US West Coast, where most of the Ilocano *balikbayan* come from, will not be confused.

Asian Spirits is flying a newly-acquired 100-seat BAe, replacing PAL's 150-seat Airbus A320.

Singson said that based on their analysis, PAL had been filling up 120 of 150 seats for the past three years. "The business was actually peaking months before the airline pulled out," he said.

He also said their report showed half of the PAL passengers were *balikbayan*, mostly from United States, while half were local tourists.

"If we can establish that there will be an equal number of the Ilocano *balikbayan* coming from Ilocos Sur compared to those in Ilocos Norte, then establishing the Manila-Vigan flight will be feasible," he said.

He said they would use smaller planes for Vigan and rehabilitate the Mindoro airstrip.

Travelling from Laoag International Airport by car to this city takes more than an hour, and from Vigan City to Candon City, the other city in the province, by another hour. But travelling by car from Manila to Laoag takes eight to 10 hours.

Singson said they are going to Taiwan and China this month to forge deals for possible Asian Spirits flights to the two areas. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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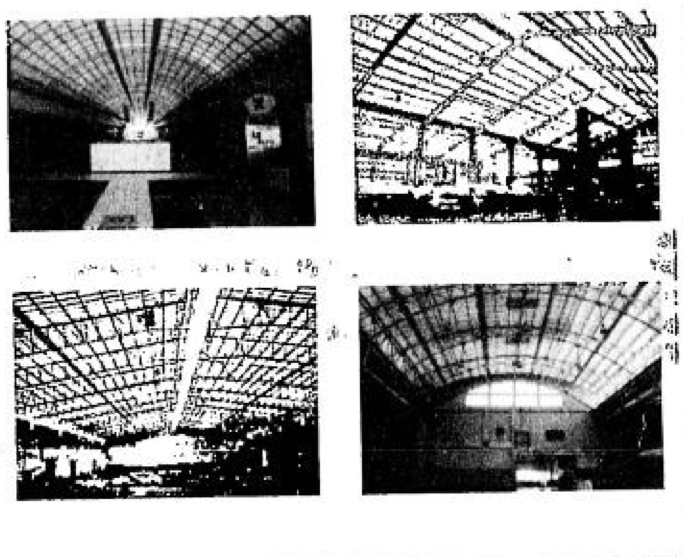

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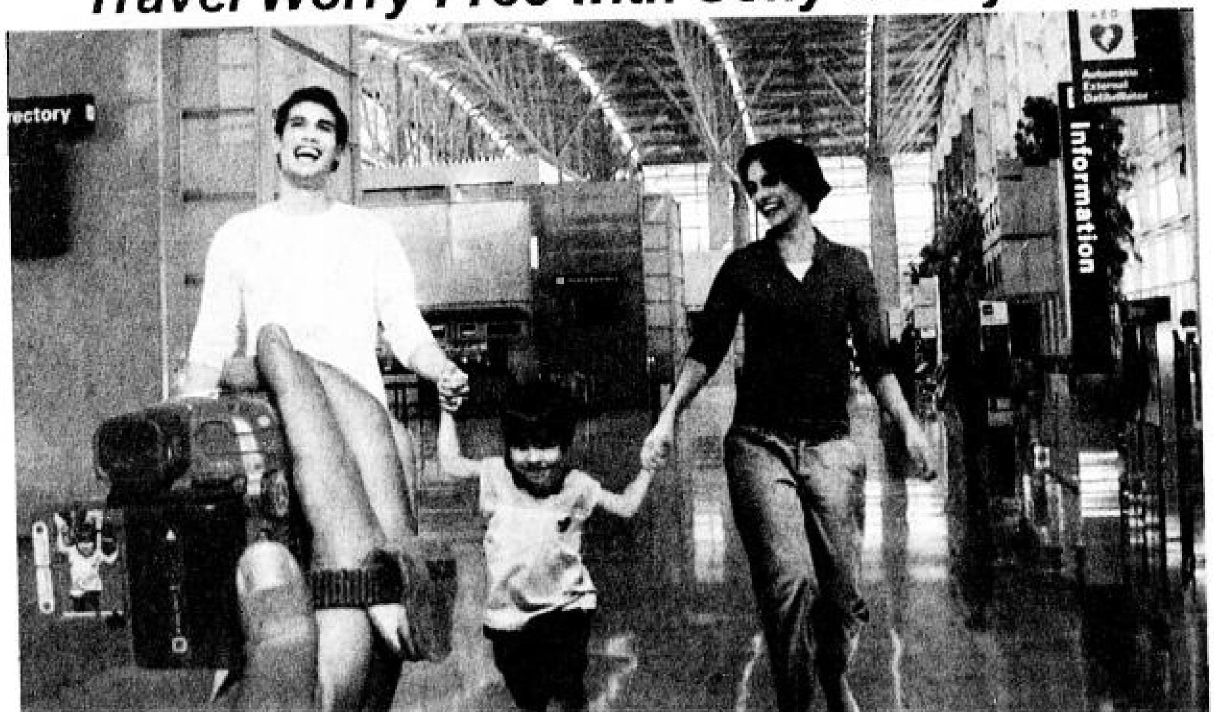

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BIRTHDAY GUEST
President Macapagal-Arroyo is all smiles as she is welcomed by Bishop Ramon Villena upon her arrival March 16 at the Bayombong Cathedral in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya to attend Mass for the bishop's 67th birthday celebration.

Reyes accused of 'double talk' on Bulacan mining

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—BULACAN Gov. Josefina de la Cruz on Wednesday accused Environment Secretary Angelo of "double talking" as a new ore transport permit (OTP) was issued to a company that is mining marble at the Biak-na-Bato National Park in Doña Remedios Trinidad and San Miguel towns.

"It's a case of saying something and doing another thing. Who else can we believe in this government?" De la Cruz, said, referring to the recent published statements of Reyes about protecting the environment and responsible mining and, on the other hand, the issuance of an OTP to the Rosemoor Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC).

Angelo Bravo, Mines and Geosciences Bureau director in Central Luzon, has allowed the RMDC to haul 793 cubic meters of marble from its 330-hectare site, a copy of his order showed.

Bravo gave the permit on March 14 even as the Bulacan provincial government in August last year urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to stop the operations of RMDC.

In February this year, the Bulacan government asked the court to issue it a temporary restraining order.

Non-government groups such as the Dangal ng Bulacan Foundation Inc., Bundok and Bangon Kalikasan have campaigned against RMDC's activities at the park, describing this as illegal and destructive to the environment.

The March 14 OTP was the fourth that Bravo has issued. The previous ones were dated Nov. 17, and Dec. 23, 2005 and Jan. 25, 2006.

De la Cruz said Bravo broke his "verbal commitment" to the court that he would not issue any OTP as litigation was ongoing.

The MGB official did not take the calls by the INQUIRER to his mobile phone. He did not answer text messages.

In an earlier interview, Bravo said RMDC's mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) No. 188 was "legal." It was granted by former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez in 2002.

Personnel of the provincial government monitoring the RMDC reported that the company resumed the hauling of marble blocks on Tuesday night.

Nora Tan, with whom RMDC president Constantino Pascual has a five-year operating and supply agreement until 2008, said the matter was Pascual's problem.

Pascual, who has been locked in an intra-corporate dispute with his relatives, said his operations were legal.

The Arroyo administration defended Reyes' appointment as environment secretary, saying Reyes' background in law enforcement was needed in protecting the environment.

Reyes took over the post vacated by Michael Defensor, who was appointed Ms Arroyo's chief of staff. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Sariaya port cleared after customs check

A GRAINS TERMINAL IN SARIAYA, Quezon has been cleared of allegations it was being used for smuggling after an inspection by finance and customs officials in its facilities.

In a statement, the Nation Granary Inc. (NGI) said a certificate clearing its shipment of corn had been issued on March 15.

Alison Sy, NGI chief executive officer, said the allegations were false.

She said the 33,000 metric tons of corn that are in a ship docked in the NGI port currently were brought in complete with permits and other documents for importation.

"They (the customs agents) went inside the ships and found nothing irregular," she said in the statement.

She said a group of businessmen could be behind a smear campaign against NGI because its facilities are world class and are capable of bringing down the cost of feeds in the country.

She refused to identify whom she suspects of being behind what she said was the smear campaign.

But she complained that talk of the port and the grains terminal being used for smuggling was hurting the project.

"Why are they destroying this project?" she asked.

"It's the country that would benefit from it."

She said the projected income from docking fees of ships that arrive at the port could reach at least P50 million a month.

The grains terminal was described as the biggest in Southeast Asia by the United Coconut Planters Bank which provided a P1.5 billion for its construction.

Sy said the 33,000 metric tons of corn were brought in to test two ship unloaders that are considered "the Mercedes Benzes" of ship unloaders because they are top of the line.

She said officials of the US Department of Agriculture had visited the facilities and saw the equipment there and were impressed.

"Your port is the best," Sy quoted one director of the Asian Development Bank as saying after visiting the port.

"Rumors of smuggling and tax evasion are being used by people who don't want the project to succeed," she said in the statement.

The port was designed to have an 18-meter drop, which the NGI statement said would allow it to accommodate cape-size ships, or vessels that can carry cargo of up to 200,000 metric tons per trip.

GMA keeps safe distance from media during visit to Bohol

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

PANGLAO, BOHOL—SEEN BUT not heard much.

President Macapagal-Arroyo did not directly address the media during her first visit to Bohol this year.

A helicopter carrying the President landed at the grounds of St. Augustin Church in Barangay Poblacion of the island-resort town of Panglao at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday. She immediately proceeded to the Bohol Beach Club (BBC) where she met with New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark.

Clark arrived at the Tagbilaran airport at 2:55 p.m. and motored to the BBC in Barangay Bolod, Panglao where she stayed overnight.

Schoolchildren welcomed Ms Clark waving flags of the Philippines and New Zealand on most of the 15-km trip to the BBC.

President Arroyo fetched Prime Minister Clark from the BBC's presidential suite and escorted her for photo-ops on the powdery white shoreline.

Ms Clark, wearing a burgundy overcoat and black pants, towered over President Arroyo who was dressed in an off-white barong blouse and pants as they waved to reporters waiting for them along the beach.

They gamely posed for photographers as soon as they were seated in rattan chairs underneath one of eight cogon-roofed umbrella huts just 50 meters from the water.

It was one of only three photo opportunities allowed by the Presidential Security Group aside from one during the start of bilateral talks at the BBC's Tarsier Function Room and during ceremonial toast at the state dinner later in the evening.

Just after two waiters wearing Hawaiian shirts served *suman* (rice pudding) and mango juice, protocol and security escorts waived reporters away to allow the two women heads of state to talk privately.

Resort sources said Ms Clark, who was booked ahead, slept at the presidential suite while Ms Arroyo was billeted at one of BBC's eight executive suites.

Ms Clark's party was composed of only 10 people while Ms Arroyo was accompanied by Vice President Noli de Castro and Cabinet Secretaries Alberto Romulo, Peter Favila, Ace Durano, Angelo Reyes and Norberto Gonzales.

Only Romulo and Favila faced reporters during a 30-minute briefing prior to the state dinner, which was attended by about 30 people, including Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, Vice Gov. Julius Caesar Herrera, Bohol Representatives Edgar Chatto, Roberto Cajes and Eladio Jala and Tagbilaran City Mayor Dan Lim.

A source said the dinner lasted until 10 p.m.

Ms Arroyo left BBC at 8 a.m. Wednesday before flying out of the Tagbilaran airport aboard a Lear jet about 30 minutes later.

2 US Marines in Subic rape set for arraignment

TWO OF FOUR US MARINES charged with raping a Filipina at Subic Bay Freeport last year are ready for their arraignment before an Olongapo City court on March 24, their Filipino lawyers said.

Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier, 29, and Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, 22, will appear at the sala of Judge Renato Dilag on March 24, according to their counsels Francisco Rodrigo and Benjamin Formoso.

"He's ready. Everything will have to proceed because there are no more pending motions to be resolved," Formoso said in a phone interview.

"We're ready," Rodrigo said in a separate phone interview.

They confirmed the appearance of their clients a day after Dilag issued an order setting the date of the arraignment. Lawyer John Coluso said he would announce the plan of his clients, Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis, after consulting with them.

The two, as well as Carpentier and Smith, are confined to the Jusmag quarters inside the US Embassy in Manila.

Dilag on Thursday warned he would order the arrest of any serviceman who would ignore the arraignment proceedings of the case, considered to be giving a litmus test to the 1999 Philippine-US Visiting Forces Agreement especially on how it relates to the principles and workings of Philippine courts.

As for the 22-year-old complainant who is a native of Zamboanga City, she said she was "still considering" if she should come, according to her private counsel Evalyn Ursua.

Dilag's order required her to appear. But on Thursday, the judge said the arraignment would still proceed without her.

He also said the arraignment would go on even if the Department of Justice recommended the dismissal of the case. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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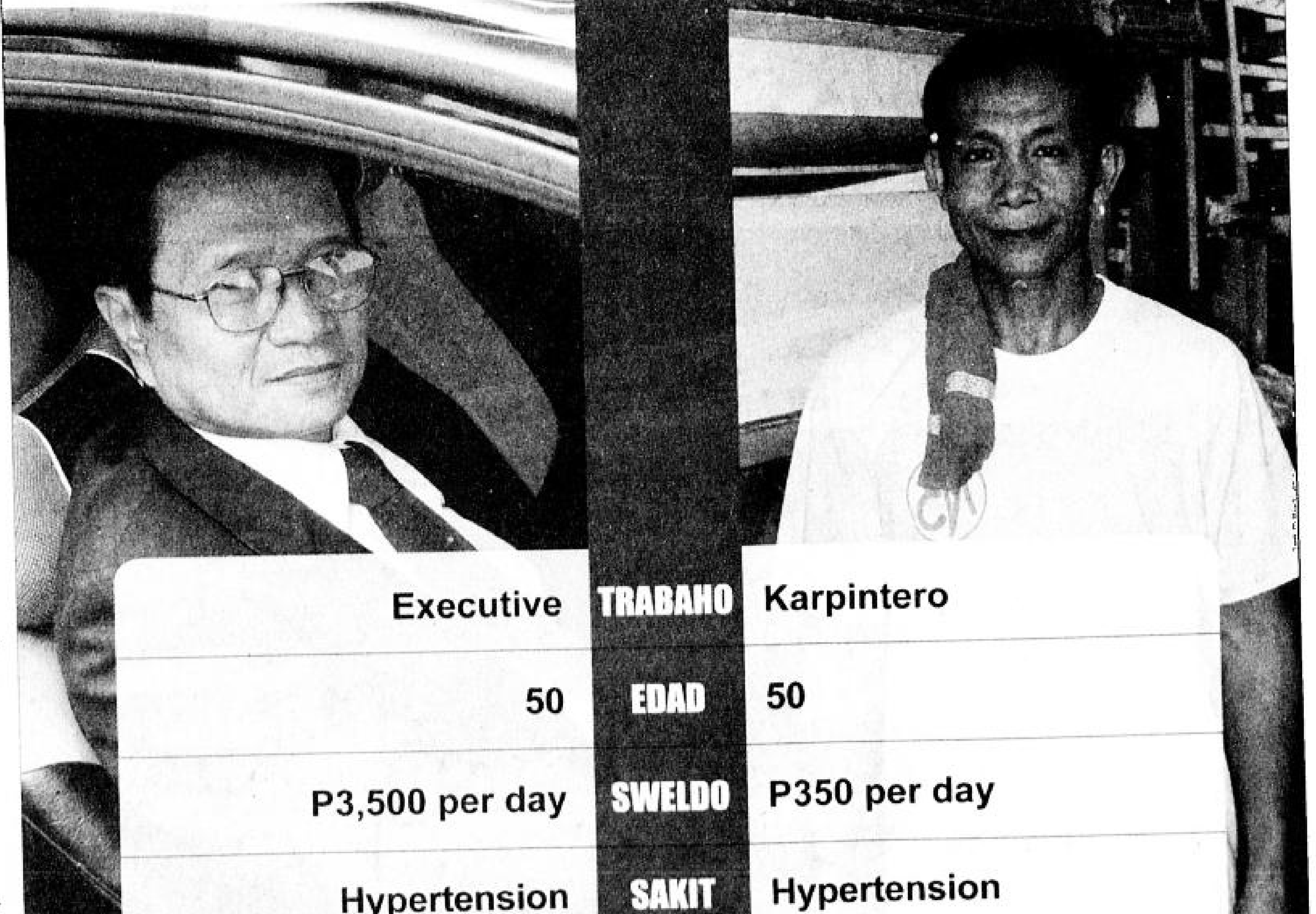
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No live TV for Erap testimony–Sandigan

By Armand N. Nocum

THROWING HIS OWN ARGUMENTS BACK at him, the Supreme Court yesterday rejected deposed President Estrada's petition for his March 22 testimony at his plunder trial to be carried live on television and radio.

In an en banc resolution yesterday, the high court said it found "no compelling reason" to reverse its June 29, 2001 ruling junking a petition from the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas to be allowed to cover live Estrada's plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court.

The high court said its decision "has long become final and executory, and therefore can no longer be reversed or modified. It has become the law of the case."

"The petition is hereby denied for lack of merit," the high court said.

The SC recalled that Estrada had vehemently opposed the KBP request for live coverage of his trial, fearing it would trigger street demonstrations aimed at influencing the Sandiganbayan proceedings, and the Supreme Court agreed with him in two previous rulings.

"Mr. Estrada contends that the right of the people to information may be served through other means less distracting, degrading and prejudicial than a live television and radio coverage," the SC said in its decision.

But Estrada reversed himself and recently asked the high court to allow his testimony to be televised.

He explained that his initial opposition to live television and radio coverage was "predicated on the fact that public prejudice against him was then running high, inflamed as it were by a biased media and partisan crowds."

LOTTO RESULT

SUERTRES	EZ2
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SIX DIGIT

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(Result above in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

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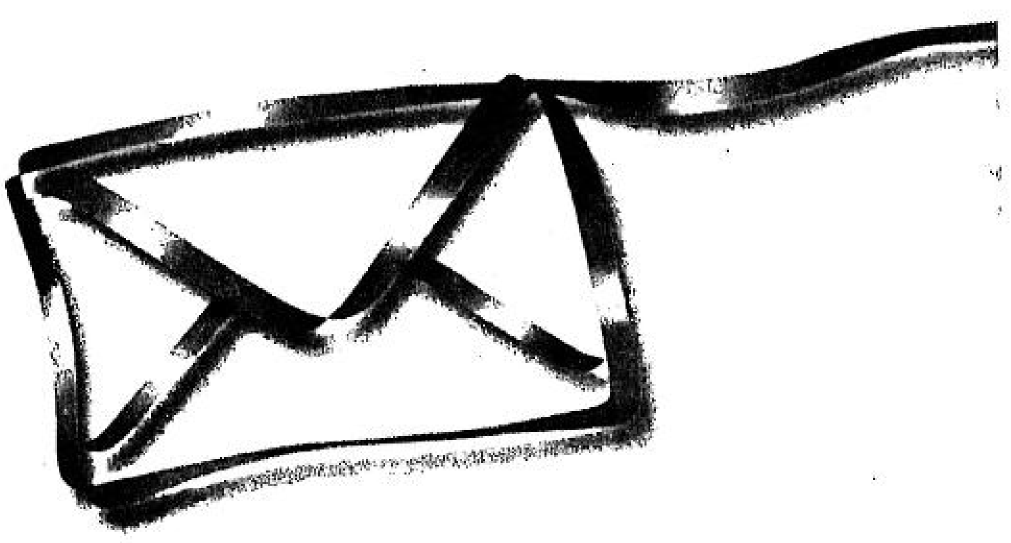

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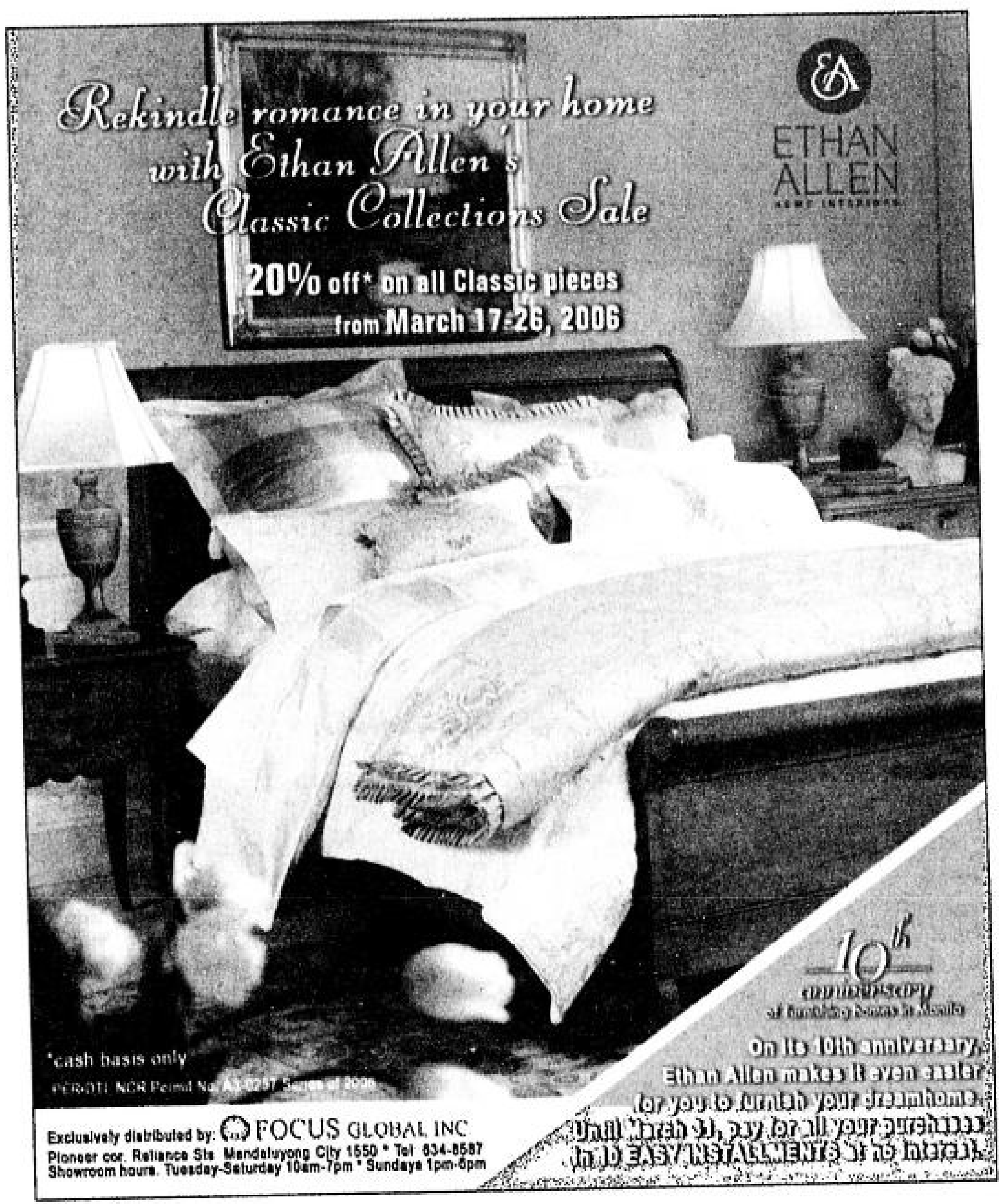
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GRIEVING father Darius Razon with victim's children.
RAFFY LERMA

WHAT'S INSIDE /A24
Truck driver in Denver Razon car accident says he's not guilty

BUREAU of Customs policeman inspects goods sold inside the mall before inventory.
REM ZAMORA

168 Mall in Binondo raided

By Leila B. Salaverria

A TEAM OF Bureau of Customs personnel raided the 168 Shopping Mall in Binondo, Manila, yesterday and asked tenants to show proof taxes and duties had been paid on their imported merchandise.

The raiding team seized at least 20,000 sacks of suspected smuggled goods by late afternoon after most stall owners or their helpers failed to produce the necessary receipts. The inspection and inventory of goods were expected to continue until today, but it would be business as usual for other tenants of the mall, according to Ronald Ragudo, president of Yeloofa Development Corporation which runs the mall.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said President Macapagal-Arroyo herself ordered the raid, which was prompted by complaints from the Philippine Retailers Association about unfair trade practices.

He said the operation, involving more than 500 customs personnel, was meant to send a signal to "economic saboteurs."

The 168 Shopping Mall, popular because of its low prices, has about 800 retailers of clothes, shoes, bags, makeup, toys, accessories, household items, and school and office supplies, among others. It is air-conditioned and has a food court on the third floor. Customs Deputy Commissioner Gallant Soriano said goods not levied duties and taxes were sold at much lower prices, unfairly competing with taxed merchandise. He said the bureau was trying to determine the port of entry of the merchandise. As most stall operators were Chinese nationals, the bureau informed the Chinese Embassy of the operation, said Morales.

Waldo Villamayor, external affairs officer of the 168 Shopping Mall, said the mall was not aware of the status of goods sold in the shopping center. "We're not involved in selling, we're just leasing the space," Villamayor told reporters. "We don't know about the transactions."

Morales said the BOC would not be going after mall officials as the bureau knew it merely rented out space to tenants. He said the mall was not obliged to check the status of the items sold by tenants. But the BOC had the authority to check if establishments selling imported goods paid taxes, Morales added.

After the inventory, seized goods would be stored at the BOC. Tenants could show proof of tax payments in a hearing later. Otherwise, the items would be forfeited in favor of the government. "We will follow due process. But if the owners fail to prove they paid taxes, they could also be held liable for smuggling," Morales said.

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Pawnshop loses P6.1 M to thieves

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

By DJ Yap

A PAWNSHOP IN QUEZON CITY lost some P6.1 million in cash and jewelry to burglars who entered the establishment through an adjoining rented house.

Four suspected members of the "Acetylene Gang" entered Tambunting Pawnshop on Commonwealth Avenue corner Litex Road, Barangay Commonwealth, between Tuesday and Wednesday, according to police.

Torch gang

The suspects bore a hole on the cement wall of the house at 182 Commonwealth Avenue, apparently using an acetylene torch, to break into the pawnshop next door, police said.

Loot

The burglars also used an acetylene torch to open the pawnshop vault, according to PO2 Jun Fabre of the criminal investigation division (CID) of the Quezon City Police District.

Melody Sayon, branch personnel manager, told police the burglars carted away P110,000 in cash and P6 million worth of jewelry.

Discovery

The burglary was committed between 10 p.m. of March 14 and 4 a.m. of March 15, police said.

Cherry Dale de los Reyes, branch cashier, discovered the theft when she reported for work the morning of March 15, police said.

Tenants

Three men and a woman rented on March 13 the house beside the pawnshop from one Teresita Castonico, investigators said.

The house used to be a videoke bar.

One of the men identified himself to the landlady as Nestor, adding that the four of them were from the Cordillera region, police said.

Suspects

PO2 Joseph Madrid, a desk officer at the CID, said the suspects could be members of the Acetylene Gang, a notorious band of thieves victimizing banks and pawnshops.

Gang members often rented space beside a targeted business establishment that they entered by boring a hole on the wall using an acetylene torch, he said.

Favorite tool

An acetylene torch could dissolve tough materials, including concrete, he explained, and was a favorite tool of burglars.

The police had arrested many Acetylene Gang members in Metro Manila, but some remained active, he said.

Copycats?

"It's also possible that the suspects only imitated the modus operandi of the Acetylene Gang," he added.

Investigators are now trying to get descriptions of the suspects.

METROBRIEFS

QC school gets new laptops

A QUEZON City public high school is now the proud owner of 30 brand-new laptop computers, as part of a program seeking to link public school students to the World Wide Web. E. Rodriguez Jr. High School in La Loma recently received the laptop units from Asian Development Bank, after it was selected as a mobile Internet laboratory under Project Gilas, or Gear Up Internet Literacy and Access for Students. Some 3,500 students stand to benefit from the donation, which will enable them to study their lessons with better access to technology, according to the city's public affairs and information services office. Project Gilas is a multi-sectoral program aimed at providing Internet access and basic Internet literacy skills to the country's 5,443 public high schools. Led by a group of private corporations and civic organizations and in coordination with the Department of Education, the project also seeks to provide Internet access to Quezon City's 142 elementary and high schools. Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and Robert L. T. Dawson, principal director of ADB administrative services office, signed the deed of donation during the turnover of the laptops early this month. *DJ Yap*

Run was not fun

AYAW KO NA NG FRAT!

FIVE students lost more than P50,000 in cash and valuables after six robbers posing as fraternity men tricked them into running naked in Pasay City on Monday as part of initiation rites, police said. The victims—Yhusop Lagyal, John Go, Nadzon Maldisa, Mark Granepa and Bienvenido Carranza—showed up at the Pasay police headquarters the following day to report the incident. They said they were at a gas station along F.B. Harrison Street at 3:45 p.m. when six unidentified men introduced themselves as members of a fraternity and talked them into joining their organization, said SP03 Danilo Unico in his report. The victims later discovered that the robbers took off with their cellphones, MP3 players and their wallets containing about P11,000 in cash while undertaking the run. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Wiloci golf tourney

THE WOMEN Lawyers Circle of the College of Law, University of the Philippines (UP-WILOCI) will hold its 2nd Annual Golf Tournament today at Tagaytay Midlands. Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban will lead the ceremonial tee-shots at 7 a.m. WILOCI is being assisted by ICTSI, Banco de Oro, Fortune Tobacco and lawyer Elenita Giron in this endeavor. The proceeds will go to the free legal aid programs of UP-WILOCI. Please call Fides Cordero-Tan (6365826) or Fina Dela Cuesta-Tantuico (8172753) for registration, tickets and other information.

RMCHS Class '76 sets 20th year reunion

THE RAMON Magsaysay (Cubao) High School Class of 1976 is planning a reunion on Dec. 29, 2006. Batch members from all sections are invited to sign up for an alumni directory, which is being compiled in preparation for the event. Alumni from the US, Canada, Europe and Asia are flying in for the occasion. For more information and to register, please call or text the following: Cora Bautista Olaguer - 0917-343 4070; Marybeth Acero Brillon - 0917-8412485; and Amy Agbuya Guillermo - 0917-341 3217. You may also join the batch's online discussion group and begin renewing ties with long lost friends and former classmates. Go to the following URL address: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RM-CHS_BATCH1976.

PR AWARDS FOR ADB

The Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) recently bestowed Anvil Awards of Merit to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Philippine Country Office website and e-newsletter for effectively communicating the ADB-Philippines Development Partnership by using both electronic public relations tools. From left are Joel Lacsamana, 41st Anvil Awards Chairman; Ed Alcaraz, Awards Committee adviser; ADB national staff Romy Dona, Rita Festin, and Norman Lu; Justice Amado D. Valdez, Chair of the Awards' Board of Jurors; and Milen de Quiros, PRSP President.

Truck driver says accident not his fault

By DJ Yap and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

KAPATID MO...
DENVER RAZON

DARIUS Razon with granddaughters Mika and Monica, at son Denver's wake at the San Roque Parish Church in Mandaluyong City. RAFFY LERMA

THE TRUCK DRIVER INVOLVED IN THE ROAD incident that killed the son of singer and former Mandaluyong City councilor Darius Razon surfaced yesterday to deny any wrongdoing.

"I was not at fault. I didn't hit the car," said Eunize Siazon, 29, driver of the 10-wheeler truck that allegedly sideswiped a Honda City and sent it slamming into an electric post on G. Araneta Avenue early Wednesday morning.

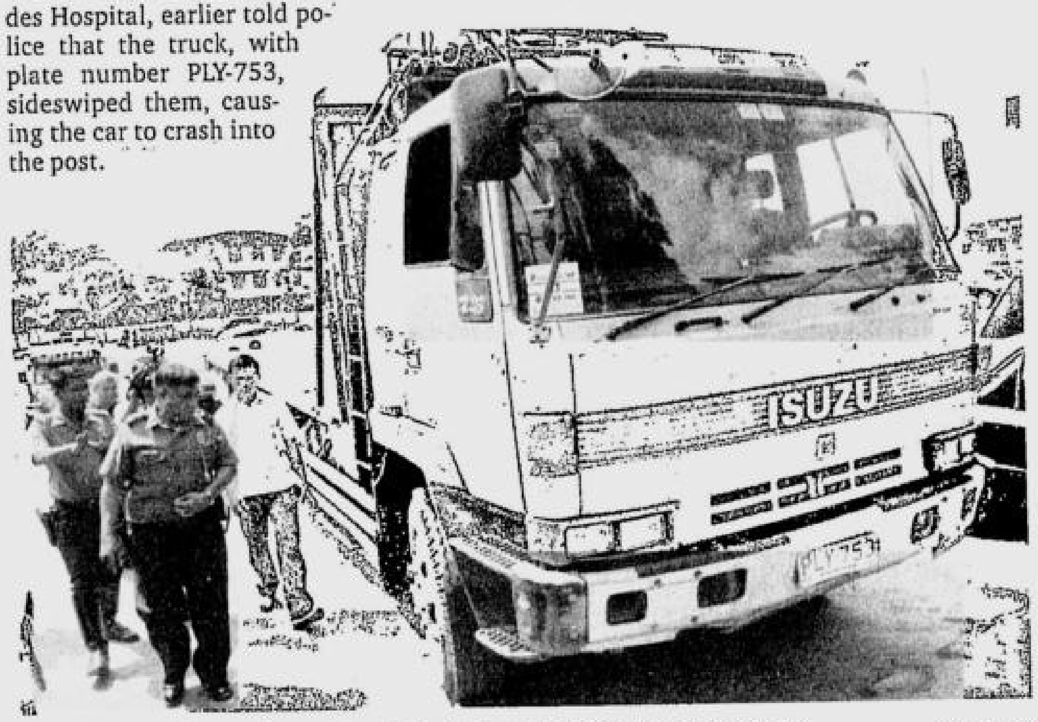
The accident killed Razon's son Denver, 29, a businessman and former show business personality, and hurt his friend Marian Bustillos, 23, who was driving the car.

More than 24 hours after the fatal road accident, Siazon appeared with his lawyer at the Camp Karingal central traffic sector office to submit himself to investigation.

He said it was Bustillos who actually cut him from the right and passed in front of the truck, before slamming into a post and bouncing on the steel gate of Alob-Alob restaurant at the corner of Palanza Street.

"I never hit them. When they passed in front of me, I saw them hit the post. Then I kept going," Siazon said in Filipino.

Bustillos, who was confined at Lourdes Hospital, earlier told police that the truck, with plate number PLY-753, sideswiped them, causing the car to crash into the post.



POLICE investigators inspect truck that allegedly sideswiped Razon's car. RAFFY LERMA

Asked why he did not stop after the accident, Siazon said he was in a hurry to deliver the truck to its depot in Sta Mesa.

Quezon City traffic district director Supt. Norberto Babagay said charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, serious physical injuries and damage to property were being readied against Siazon.

Denver's death came 14 years after Razon, who only had two children, lost his teenaged daughter in a fire that razed his house in 1992.

Razon said he not only lost a son but a friend. He described his son as "generous, friendly and always willing to help."

He said he was surprised by the outpouring of love for his son and by stories of how Denver helped others.

Denver, who had a degree in Business Administration, owned Bike Spa, a cleaning shop for motorcycles, and Bikers' Grill.

Denver's body lies at the San Roque Parish. He would be buried Tuesday afternoon at the Aglipayan Cemetery in a tomb beside that of his sister.

Lawyers, urban groups seek NorthRail halt

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A LAWYERS' GROUP AND MEMbers of urban poor organizations yesterday asked a Makati court to stop the implementation of the controversial NorthRail Project, a multi-million dollar infrastructure project that recently spurred a Senate investigation.

Five lawyers from the Makati City-based Roque and Butuyan law firm, with the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay), the League of Urban Poor for Action and its Bulacan chapter, Kilusan ng Maralita sa Meycauayan, filed an injunction against the government and the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (CNMEC) before the Makati Regional Trial Court yesterday.

The complainants are asking the court to declare null and void the contract between the defendants for the construction of a $503 million railway from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan. A China-based firm, CNMEC entered into a memorandum agreement with the government in September 2002 to pursue the NorthRail Project, President Macapagal-Arroyo's flagship infrastructure project. The suit also asked that the court declare unconstitutional a $400-million loan agreement between the Export-Import Bank of China and the government, signed two months later for the project's funding.

Respondents

Named as respondents were the CNMEC, Executive Secretary. Eduardo Ermita, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Budget Secretary. Rolando Andaya Jr., National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Augusto Santos, and the North Luzon Railways Corporation, an agency organized under the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) to "develop, construct, operate and manage a railway system from Metro Manila to Central and Northern Luzon."

Filing their complaint in the lower court was a recourse for the group as a case they had filed before the Supreme Court, which was in essence the same as the civil case filed yesterday, was dismissed with finality in January.

"Clear... is the violation of the plaintiffs' rights as taxpayers, who suffer and will continue to suffer severe injury and damage from the expenditure of public funds to enforce or implement void and illegal contracts," reads the complaint, signed by lawyers Herminia Harry Roque, Jr., Joel Butuyan, Roger Rayel, Romel Bagares, and Christopher Francisco Bolastig. Roque, a professor at the UP Law Center, was part of the legal team that studied the contract which, it said, contained flaws.

For one, the complaint cited, the contract was not put through "competitive public bidding." It added that the contract "was unfunded... at the time it was signed," as the loan agreement between government and Export-Import Bank of China belatedly came into the picture.

The loan agreement was doubly anomalous, said the complaint, as it was signed "without prior concurrence" of the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, as required under the law.

No license

"Moreover, prior to the... execution of the NorthRail contract and the loan agreement, the CNMEC did not have a special license issued by the government, which is a license required of every foreign contractor who participates in a foreign-funded project," the complaint added. The plaintiffs further said that the implementation of the NorthRail contracts would "cause grave and irreparable injury and damage to the Government and taxpayers."

"... It will surely entail the expenditure of a huge amount of public funds for the execution of illegal and unconstitutional acts. It is unconscionable that the government imposes austerity measures and demands new taxes from the people while public money is spent on contracts that are clearly illegal, unconstitutional and unfavorable to the public treasury," said the complaint.

Ultra stampede victims' kin want 'Wowowee' off the air

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FAMILIES OF VICTIMS IN THE Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) stampede on Feb. 4 want to stop the game show "Wowowee" from being shown on television so soon after the tragedy.

They sent a letter on Wednesday to the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) asking it to stop ABS-CBN from airing the show as they were still grieving the loss of loved ones and surviving victims were still recovering from injuries.

"The re-airing of 'Wowowee' (at this time) is the height of callousness and insensitivity," they said in their letter to Ronald Olivar Solis, NTC commissioner.

The survivors also asked the NTC to prevent Willie Revillame from hosting the show. Revillame was among those found liable by the National Bureau of Investigation for the stampede that killed 71 people and injured hundreds.

The return of the game show on Saturday reportedly came as a shock to the victims.

Watching it again, they said, reminded them of the horrors of being trampled underfoot during the stampede. The victims wanted to join the show's first anniversary celebration. "We, the relatives of those who died and were injured in the stampede, were deeply hurt and insulted by the move of ABS-CBN Management," they said in the letter.

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

The WORLD

RICE making her point aboard USS Port Royal in Sydney on March 16. AP

US to China: Explain buildup

Huge Sino defense spending worries America

SYDNEY—THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED about China's military buildup and Beijing should make its intentions clear, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday.

Rice was speaking at a news conference here after meeting Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and ahead of a new trilateral security dialogue with Japan on Saturday, at which China's growing power is top of the agenda.

"We've said we have concerns about the Chinese military buildup. We've told the Chinese that they need to be transparent," she said.

"I heard there's going to be a 14 percent increase in the Chinese defense budget—that's a lot—and China should undertake to be transparent about what that means."

Rice's remarks come amid a renewed rise in tensions between China and Taiwan after Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian moved to suspend an advisory council set up to look at eventual reunification with the mainland.

China, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province, was infuriated by the decision, calling it a dangerous move toward Taiwan's "independence" and a threat to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

Beijing urged the United States, which is Taiwan's biggest military supplier, to take a harder line against Chen ahead of Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington next month.

Rice, in an apparent effort to counter suggestions that US President George W. Bush has instead begun taking a more hawkish line on China, said his policy had not changed.

"To the degree we have concerns, we are going to raise them. We're going to raise them about human rights and religious freedoms, but I think this policy has been consistent from the day the president came to Washington," she said. *AFP*

Unforgivable crime, Abbas brands raid

JERICHO, WEST BANK—PALESTINIAN President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday condemned Israel's raid on a West Bank prison and seizure of a militant leader as a crime that would not be forgiven.

Across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Palestinians went on strike over an Israeli operation that has boosted interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert ahead of March 28 general elections.

Israeli security forces were on high alert after Ahmed Saadat's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Islamist militant group Hamas promised retaliation.

However, militants released the four remaining foreign hostages seized in response to the Israeli raid.

Israeli forces used tanks and bulldozers to tear apart the Jericho jail on Tuesday to grab Saadat, accused by Israel of overseeing the 2001 assassination of Israeli Cabinet Minister Rehavam Zeevi, for which responsibility was claimed by the PFLP.

Speaking at the destroyed jail, Abbas accused British and US monitors supervising the incarceration of Saadat and five other detained militants of complicity with Israel.

"What happened is an ugly crime which cannot be forgiven and a humiliation for the Palestinian people and a violation of all the agreements. Their arrest by Israel is illegal," Abbas said.

The United States and Britain, citing security concerns, withdrew the monitors on Tuesday and Israeli forces moved in minutes later. Both denied cooperating with Israel.

Israel said it had to act once the monitors withdrew and it described the raid as a powerful message to Hamas, which is forming a government after winning a January election.

"We are not going to compromise with terror. We are proud that we have imposed justice on these killers without hurting unfairly any other person who was not involved," Olmert told reporters during a meeting with police chiefs in Jerusalem. *Reuters*

PALESTINIAN Authority President Mahmoud Abbas surrounded by guards and media during a visit to the rubble of the prison damaged in an Israeli Army raid in the West Bank town of Jericho March 15. AP

But US strategy tags Iran as biggest threat

WASHINGTON—MAKING NO apologies for the war in Iraq, the United States warned states like North Korea and especially Iran Thursday that it will take preemptive military action if necessary to protect itself.

"We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran," the White House said in a blueprint called the "National Security Stategy" of the United States, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

North Korea "presents a long and bleak record of duplicity and bad-faith negotiations," the document said, warning: "We will continue to take all necessary measures to protect our national and economic security against the adverse effects of their bad conduct.

In other areas, the United States warned Russia that its relations with the West depend on pursuing democratic reforms and urged China to follow economic opening with political freedom—while saying that Washington would "hedge" for the possibility that Beijing does not do so.

The document made clear that Washington does not view the failure to find the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) at the core of the public case for the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a blow against its strategy of preventive war. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Despite US, new UN rights council

UNITED NATIONS—Brushing aside objections from the United States, the UN General Assembly on Wednesday overwhelmingly endorsed creation of a revamped body to replace the current, discredited Human Rights Commission. By a vote of 170 in favor, four against—the United States, Israel, Palau and Marshall Islands—and three abstentions—Iran, Venezuela and Belarus—the assembly passed a resolution setting up a 47-member Human Rights Council. The new body is designed to be more effective and will replace the current, Geneva-based Commission, which has seen its credibility, tarnished by the presence among its 53 members of notorious human rights abusers such as China, Cuba, Sudan and Zimbabwe. *AFP*

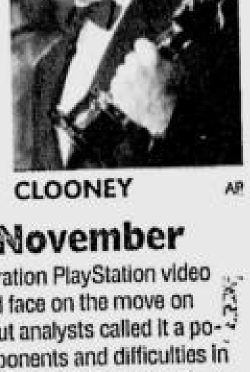
Widows not as grief-stricken as believed

WASHINGTON—The sad image of a grieving widow may not be entirely accurate, according to a study published on Tuesday showing that six months after the death of their partner, nearly half of older people had few symptoms of grief. And 10 percent cheered up, according to the survey conducted by the University of Michigan and paid for by the National Institute on Aging. The study, which followed 1,500 couples over the age of 65 for years, looked at the quality of their marriages, their attitudes toward one another, and the effects on one spouse after the other died. Close to half—46 percent—said they had enjoyed their marriages but were able to cope with the loss of a spouse without much grieving. "Until recently, mental health experts assumed that persons with minimal symptoms of grief were either in denial, emotionally distant or lacked a close attachment to their spouse," Rutgers University sociologist Deborah Carr, who began analyzing the data while she was at the University of Michigan, said. *Reuters*

Saddam urges war on US in trial

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Saddam Hussein took the witness stand on Wednesday for his first formal testimony in his trial and delivered an incendiary political diatribe that urged Iraqis to stop sectarian bloodshed and to carry on the war against the Americans. The presiding judge halted the session after Saddam repeatedly lambasted the court. Saddam's nearly 40-minute speech was the most explosive element so far in a trial that has already been punctuated by tirades from the defendants and searing testimony from victims. Saddam had delivered outbursts before, but his sense of decorum and calm manner on Wednesday showed he was keenly aware that the spotlight was reserved for him. He went on to do exactly what Iraqi and US officials had long feared he might—use the session, televised across the Middle East, to try to incite the Sunni-led insurgency to further violence. *NYT*

Clooney gives Oscar swag to charity



CLOONEY AP

LOS ANGELES—The Oscar was gift enough for George Clooney. The winner of the Academy Award for best supporting actor for his role in "Syriana" has donated his overflowing Oscar gift bag to the United Way, a spokesperson for the organization said Wednesday. The swag will be sold in an online auction to benefit the United Way Hurricane Response and Relief Recovery Fund, said spokesperson Sheila Consaul. Clooney is a member of the charity's board of trustees, she said. The pricey gift bag given to presenters at the 78th Annual Academy Awards included a BlackBerry 8700c, a Kay Unger kimono and a cultured Tahitian-pearl necklace. The entire collection will be sold to "one very, very lucky bidder," Consaul said. *AP*

PlayStation3 release now in November

TOKYO—After postponing the release of its next-generation PlayStation video game console until November, Sony tried to put a good face on the move on Wednesday by portraying it as a marketing decision. But analysts called it a potentially costly step that reflected delays in critical components and difficulties in containing prices. The delay of the new console, PlayStation 3, analysts said, was a setback for the turnaround efforts of Sony's chief executive, Howard Stringer, at a time when the company badly needs a new hit product. Sony, once a high-flying electronics maker and still perhaps the biggest name in the industry, has fallen on hard times as cheap competition from China has eroded earnings of bread-and-butter consumer electronics products like televisions. Ken Kutaragi, president of Sony's game division, apologized repeatedly during a hastily called meeting of game software developers, analysts and reporters for failing to have the console ready in Japan this spring, as originally promised. *NYT*

As protests grow, Thaksin ponders retirement

BANGKOK, THAILAND—PRIME Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand said Wednesday that he might step aside temporarily in the face of huge continuing protests, but he kept open the option of getting tough instead by declaring a state of emergency.

A sense of crisis intensified in Thailand as thousands of people conducted a round-the-clock demonstration and demands multiplied for the prime minister to resign.

The confrontation echoed popular uprisings in the Philippines, Ukraine, Georgia and other nations where elected leaders have been driven from office by what Thaksin, like other besieged officials, called "mob rule."

As was the case in some of those uprisings, the Thai demonstration, which at its peak attracted a crowd estimated at 100,000, was festive, with pop music, skits, speeches, ice cream, roasted peanuts and periodic chants of "Get out!"

"It's a good proposal," Thaksin said when a reporter asked about suggestions by business leaders and academics that he take a break from his position as prime minister.

But he added: "This does not mean that I would bow to mob rule. I have to take some time to consider and decide what to do, because I have a duty to complete my mission."

Adding to the mixed signals, Thaksin on Tuesday promoted to first deputy prime minister Gen. Chidchai Wannasathit, a former classmate who is in charge of security affairs in the Cabinet and is justice minister.

Analysts said this could be read either as preparation for Thaksin to step aside and leave the government in the hands of a trusted subordinate, or as preparation for a crackdown on demonstrators. *New York Times News Service*

Milosevic medical mystery deepens

ROME—FRUSTRATED AND filled with skepticism about Slobodan Milosevic's litany of medical complaints, the tribunal at The Hague at times failed to investigate them adequately, several doctors who had recently examined Milosevic, the former Serbian leader, said this week.

"His medical condition was not good, so we asked for additional tests to evaluate his cardiac situation," said Dr. Florence Leclercq, a French cardiologist. "But these investigations were never performed, and now that's a problem." A tribunal official said it was not possible to comment while an inquiry was under way.

For months before his death last weekend, Milosevic and the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague had been sparring over his health: Was he so perilously ill that he needed medical evacuation or was he exaggerating the usual maladies of a 64-year-old man to evade justice? His death ended prematurely a four-year-long war crimes trial, suspended more than 20 times because of his illness, but only deepened the medical mystery.

Preliminary autopsy results said he had died of a heart attack, although doctors who examined him just months ago said they did not believe he had significant heart disease. Likewise, tests done before he died detected the presence of a medicine he had not been prescribed, one that would have put him at risk by reducing the effectiveness of his blood pressure pills. *New York Times News Service*

SOCIALIST party officials kiss and touch the coffin of the late Milosevic, draped with a Serbian flag, upon its arrival at Belgrade airport March 15. AP

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RP Open golf gets big lift

BENNY Gopez and Patrick Young sealed the agreement with a handshake. RODEL ROTONI

By Jong Arcano

A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE PHILIPPINE OPEN GOLF Championship is looming on the horizon.

A partnership forged between the Asian Tour and the National Golf Association of the Philippines makes the 90th edition of the Philippine Open on May 25 to 28 a certainty, with a prize fund of at least $200,000 (about P10.2 million).

Although the venue was not announced, there are indications that the Open is heading back to the fabled east course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

But before that happens, Wack Wack needs to return to the NGAP fold as a member after resigning several years ago in the aftermath of a disagreement which also had the Open as the main issue.

"We are looking for a venue that is commercially viable," said Patrick Young, director for tour development of the Asian Tour, hinting at Wack Wack as the best choice.

Wack Wack officials pledged to work out a special agreement with the NGAP to pave the way for the Open hosting.

Young said they are bent on bringing back the prestige of the RP Open,the oldest professional tournament in Asia.

Outgoing NGAP president Benny Gopez signed the agreement with Young for a five-year deal giving commercial and media rights of the Philippine Open to the Asian Tour at Villamor yesterday.

The deal guarantees the NGAP of $15,000 as rights fees this year, $20,000 next year and $30,000 for the third year.

Gopez and secretary-general Luisito Fernandez are not seeking re-election in the NGAP polls on March 24.

Tierro stuns Korean, meets No.1 Austrian

PATRICK JOHN TIERRO SHOCKED No. 7 seed Hyun Woo-nam of Korea, 6-4, 6-4, yesterday to earn a quarterfinals showdown against top seed Austrian Herbert Wiltschnig in the $25,000 New Delhi Masters at the R K Khanna Stadium in New Delhi.

The 6-foot-1 SEA Games gold medalist leaned on his heavy serves and powerful forehands to take the sting out of the 22-year-old Korean in the event which is under the Association of Tennis Professionals/International Tennis Federation circuit.

Supported by Cebuana Lhuillier, Jean Henri Lhuillier and the Philippine Tennis Association, Tierro, whose service game has not been broken since the first round, broke his foe's serve once on each set.

The Korean is ranked No. 813 in the world, while Tierro is the lowest-ranked player at 1173. Witschnig reached as high as No. 171 in 2000.

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Focus 1.8L	945,000	100,000	74,719	51,438	40,975	29,237	23,594	20,389	472,500	41,071	28,135	22,516	16,066	12,972	10,988
Focus 1.8L with Skirt	975,000	100,000	77,429	53,314	42,461	30,298	24,449	21,133	487,500	42,426	29,073	23,259	16,597	13,399	11,354
Everest 4x2 MT	1,065,000	150,000	78,500	-	42,500	31,500	23,500	-							
Everest 4x2 AT	1,115,000	150,000	82,500	-	45,500	33,500	24,500	-							
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Kings parade hurting Menk vs SMB today

GAMES TODAY (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:40 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Air21
7:35 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Barangay Ginebra

BARANGAY GINEBRA DID A GOOD JOB OF proving there is life even with Erik Menk riding the bench.

The Kings might have to continue proving that fact as they gun for a share of the lead against dangerous San Miguel Beer in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Menk, the league's reigning MVP, was utilized sparingly following a sprained ankle during Ginebra's come-from-behind 98-93 victory over Sta. Lucia Realty. He will be feeling the effects of that injury when the Kings clash against the Beermen starting at 7:35 p.m.

"He's (Menk) really having trouble with it," said Barangay Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen. "He'll play but not yet 100 percent."

Mark Caguioa has been consistently carrying the offensive load for the Kings, who have made up for Menk's absence down low with a lot of backcourt help from Jayjay Helterbrand, Kalani Ferreria and Rodney Santos.

The Kings' frontline, now anchored by Rommel Adducul and Mike Holper, will face a similar challenge to what the Realtors frontline of Marlou Aquino and Dennis Espino posed. San Miguel's combination at the low blocks includes the likes of Dorian Peña, Danny Ildefonso, Migs Noble and 6-foot-7 rookie Mark Kong.

"I believe in the never-say-die attitude of my players," said Tanquingcen. *June Navarro*

Pals eye HK win

IT'S ALL WORK FOR THE TALK 'N TEXT Phone Pals in Hong Kong this weekend.

Still winless in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup, the Phone Pals hope to break out of the rut when they take on the Purefoods Chunkee Giants in the league's first official out-of-the-country game this season with PLDT Global, Smart Padala as major sponsor in cooperation with San Miguel Beer.

Talk 'N Text is currently at the bottom of the standings with a 0-2 win-loss card, losing badly against defending champion Barangay Ginebra in its debut, 81-98, and then dropping a 102-105 thriller against Air21 the last time.

Derrick Pumaren isn't pushing the panic button yet but he knows very well the Phone Pals have to start winning. And they could do so at an expectedly packed Queen Elizabeth Stadium.

Especially since Talk 'N Text owner Manny Pangilinan considers Hong Kong a second home, having been based in the country for most of the time.

The match is slated 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

RUFINO Bayron continues to trail by four shots going to Wack Wack. ERIK ARAZAS

Balasabas repulses Caddies' pursuers

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—DISPLAYING GRACE UNDER PRESSURE in truly difficult conditions, Jessie Balasabas turned in a finish worth remembering to hold on to a four-stroke lead going into the final 18 holes of the National Caddies' Open.

The 23-year-old drained long birdie putts in his final two holes to sign for a two-over 74 at Cangolf North here, ending an interesting mano-a-mano duel with Rufino Bayron in style to total 218 counting his first two rounds at Calatagan.

It also exorcised his ghost of the past, when Balasabas missed the third round cut by a stroke last year after faltering in this course where blustery gusts are an everyday fare and errant shots are punished by the tree-lined roughs.

Balasabas will play fabled Wack Wack East for the first time today, when he tries to put the finishing touches to an overpowering campaign and become the second champion of this noble tournament supported by Pagcor and San Miguel.

Bayron matched Balasabas' 74 for 222 and Mark Fernando turned in a 73 to be in third, 10 strokes ahead of 17-year-old Apo Golf entry Paul Echavez, who shot a 77 for 235.

"Five-over tomorrow (at Wack Wack) wins it," Balasabas, a high school dropout from Zamboanga, said in Filipino. "I have never played that course before, but I like my chances, being in the lead."

Bayron pulled level after 13 holes before hooking his drive out-of-bounds on the par-5 14th to fall one down again despite saving bogey.

Pilipinas Basketball to widen scope

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE president Peping Cojuangco yesterday offered suggestions to the proposed constitution and bylaws of the new basketball body, giving emphasis on the membership provision that would allow "legit" cage associations and leagues to get into the fold.

Mark Joseph, a member of the POC's basketball task force, yesterday said Cojuangco has reviewed the new charter of the Pilipinas Basketball submitted last Wednesday which will then be forwarded to the international basketball federation (Fiba) by the end of the month.

According to the text message sent by Joseph, the membership of the new body must extend to women's, street basketball and even children's leagues. "These suggestions have been forwarded to the stakeholders named in the MOU, and verbal assurances have been given that these principles would be adhered to." *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Boxers should emulate Flash Elorde

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE LATE GABRIEL "FLASH" Elorde was born on March 25, 1935 in abject poverty. "My parents were poor," he once said in an interview. "I quit school and work at an early age to augment the family's meager income. I was shining shoes in Bogo, Cebu, before becoming a boxer."

Elorde was discovered by boxing impresario Lope "Papa" Sarreal, who later became his father-in-law when the God-fearing and unassuming young boxer married Papa's daughter, the Tokyo-educated Laura.

"He is the most dedicated boxer I know," Sarreal said of his famous son-in-law. "*Walang bisyo* (He had no vice")", added the grand old man of boxing, who charted the career of not only Elorde but also of more than 20 world champions, including flyweight Masao Ohba of Japan, super lightweight Saensak Muangsurin of Thailand and super featherweight Ricardo Arredondo of Argentina. Sarreal died on March 14, 1995 at the age of 92.

Before Manny Pacquiao, Flash Elorde was the most celebrated Filipino boxer in Philippine sports history. Elorde earned universal acclaim for successfully defending his World Boxing Council junior lightweight championship for a record 10 times in a span of seven years, the longest in the 130-lb division. A southpaw, Elorde won the WBC title by stopping American Harold Gomes in the seventh round at the jampacked Araneta Coliseum on March 16, 1960, the day the Big Dome was officially opened to the public.

Elorde lost the title to Japanese challenger Yoshiaki Numata via a 15-round decision in Tokyo on June 15, 1967. Elorde died of lung cancer on Jan. 2, 1985 at the age of 49.

To mark his 71st birthday on March 25, Ms Laura Elorde and her children Johnny, Bebot and Marty will host another Banquet of Champions Awards Night—the sixth in as many years—at the Dusit-Nikko Hotel. Manny Pacquiao, WBC flyweight champion, Bryan Viloria and Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista will be feted for their outstanding achievements in the ring.

"If Bay (Flash Elorde) were alive today, he would be on stage to personally present these awards to those boxers who did us proud," said Laura.

***

BITS AND PIECES. Fit as a fiddle, former President Fidel V Ramos will mark his 76th birthday tomorrow. Born on March 18, 1928 in Lingayen, Pangasinan, FVR is not only a topnotch golfer, but a good swimmer, runner, skydiver and scuba diver as well.

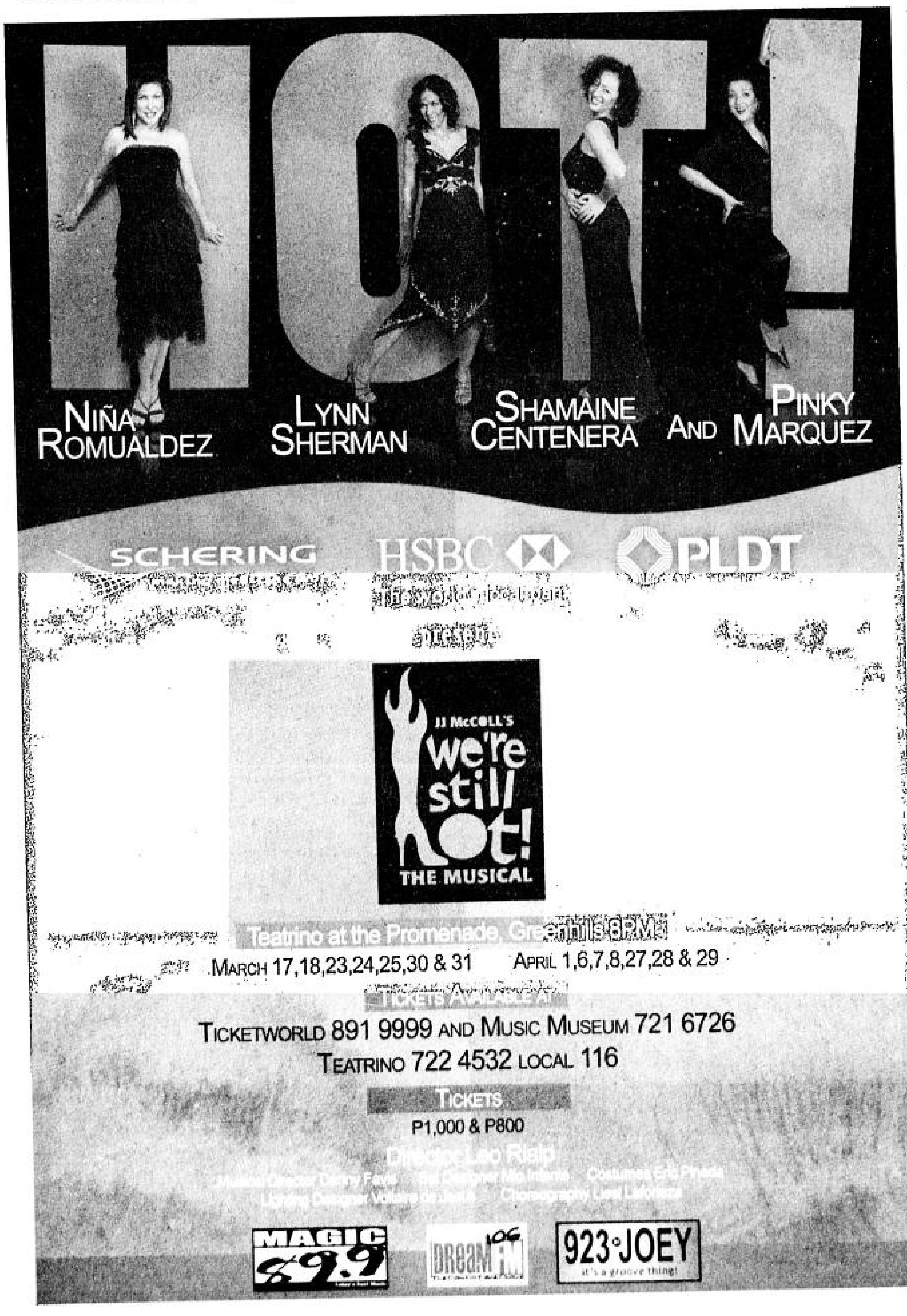
RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ort/Tri)—Smart Choice (5), Tiramisu (6), Guardian (1), Hundred Reason (4)
Race 2—(Tri)—Key Element (5), Valid Hazm (1), Distinctive Dancer (4)
Race 3—(Ort/Tri)—Born Perfect (3), Gentleman's Lady (6), West Swinger (1), St. Emilion (5)
Race 4—(Tri)—Brittney's Magic (4), C'est Moi (1), Reign of Roses
Race 5—(Ort/Tri)—Daddy's Girl (3), Bomb Shell (4), Elegant Fashion (1), Join The Saints (5)
Race 6—(Tri)—Sir Benjo (1), Scarlet Beauty (2), Strong Colony (4)
Race 7—(Ort/Tri)—Ocean Deep (2), Cara Dura (6), Striker (1), Donna Messler (4)
Race 8—(Ort/Tri)—Mary Jane Bomb (5), Music Quest (4), Habagat (3), Express Strike (2)
Race 9—(Super 6/Ort/Tri)—Cool Turner (7), Gelay's Charm (1), Replica (3), Fly Aday Fly (5), Beat D'Heat (2), Court General (6)

Loyola kartfest guest

CARMONA MAYOR DAHLIA LOYOLA WILL BE THE guest of honor when the 2006 Shell Helix Superkarting Series kicks off tomorrow at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Carmona, Cavite. Loyola will be joined by Automobile Association of the Philippines chair and former rallye champion Armando Eduque and Yoshiki Yoshida, vice president of Philippine Auto Components Denso Iridium Power, in the opening ceremonies Sunday. The seven-leg series is sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Helix, Denso Iridum Power, Honda Phils., Eastway Company, Aeromed Ambulance Transport and Yokohama Kart Tires.



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NBC heads south

PAGADIAN CITY—EXpansion team Pagadian battles Valencia Golden Harvest today as NBC (National Basketball Conference) action shifts to the southern division.

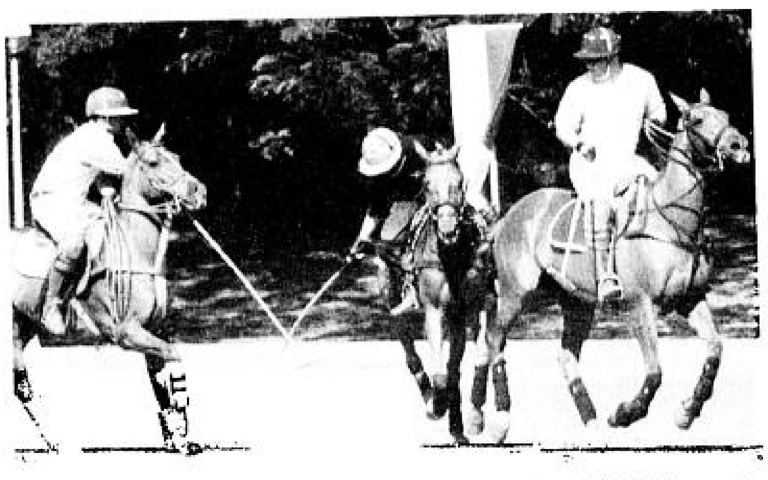
Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers are raring to make an impressive start against the Golden Harvest of Mayor Jose Galario Jr. at 6 p.m. at the city gym here.

An hour-long opening ceremony featuring NBC teams from Visayas and Mindanao will usher in today's match at 5 p.m.

Tomorrow, the Firefly Electric-backed Iligan Crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz plays host to another expansion squad—the North Cotabato Braves of Gov. Manny Piñol—at 7 p.m.

Sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Molten, Nature's Spring, Regend Foods and official cable carrier Prime Channel, NBC started last week in Tagaytay City with NBC president Tac Padilla's Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque and Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino's squad hurdling their respective rivals.

Spring beat Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila while Batang Tagaytay stunned Pangasinan Hundred Islands.



CITIGROUP CUP: Santi Juban and Jerome Hernandez of the Whites and Osang Yulo of the Blues go at it during the Citigroup Cup at the Manila Polo. The Blues, also composed of Cole Aguirre, Freddie and Sonny Borromeo won. Completing the Whites were Jun Eusebio and Edwin Arce.

SPORTSWATCH

Taekwondo, wushu in summer sports

IT WILL be a busy summer for taekwondo, wushu and football enthusiasts as the SM chain of malls stages a series of tournaments, demos and fun games beginning next month. Wushu holds a tourney and demo at SM Manila on April 1-2. Taekwondo will hold its competitions on April 3-4 at SM North Edsa before SM Sucat hosts a tourney on April 5-6. Football action kicks off on April 4-5 at SM Manila. Taekwondo is set in 18 SM branches nationwide.

JP Tuason leads TRS-Tony Kart team

AFTER running the Tuason Racing School (TRS) for two years, multi-titled JP Tuason returns to action when he leads the TRS-Tony Kart Team in Leg 1 of the 2006 National Karting Series on March 18-19 at the Carmona Circuit in Cavite. Others on the team are Toti Turalba, Juha Turalbe, Von Medrano, Robby Benito, Joey Orduna, AR Medrano, and Javi Toledo.

NCFP Region I elims go to Pangasinan

THE NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines Region I qualifying round for the country's representatives to the 2006 World Chess Olympiad begins today at the Binmaley Municipal Hall in Binmaley, Pangasinan. The top 10 finishers of the event dubbed as Mayor Simplico Rosario Cup will advance to the semis on April 16-20 in Manila. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

PCCA derby holds 60 fights today

THE fifth leg of the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 4-cock derby will be held at the Pasay City Cockpit at 6 p.m. today with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. A prize of P300,000 is up for grabs, said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. Call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

TOP SCHOOL: The Bert Lozada Swim School was awarded the 2005 Most Outstanding Swim School during the Philippine Marketing Excellence Awards. Receiving the award are BLSS managing directors Angelo and Anthony Lozada and Bert Lozada.

Pichay new NCFP president

REP. PROSPERO "BUTCH" PICHAY WON THE PRESIDENCY of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) by a landslide late Wednesday night at the Senator Lounge of the Manila Hotel.

Pichay, inheriting a sports association often wracked by bickering and controversy, is hopeful that under his term Philippine chess will return to its golden age.

"I thank the newly elected NCFP board of directors for giving me the mandate to lead this organization into a bright future," said the lawmaker from Mindanao. Pichay, who represents the 1st District of Surigao del Sur in Congress, won the voting among elected board members via a 12-0 vote with one abstention.

Three-time secretary general Sammy Estimo, who topped the NCFP poll previously, lost his post to Tagaytay City mayor and noted sportsman Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr., 7-5.

Pichay has bared plans to hold several tournaments, foremost of which is the Congressman Prospero "Butch" Pichay Presidential Invitational Cup.

Other plans include the staging of a Philippine International FIDE-rated Open that will give a hundred local players a chance to earn ELO ratings. Two GM tournaments will also take place in Subic, Zambales and Baguio City. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

DELA MERCED

Lady driver joins AF3

A VERY PROMISING LADY RACER has made the jump from Formula Toyota and BMW racing to Formula Three and is out to stamp her mark in this year's AF3 circuit against a host of talented and more seasoned drivers.

Gaby dela Merced, 23, has signed up with Speedtech Asia in the Promotions class of the Asian Formula Three and will drive alongside Tyson Sy, the first Filipino to score a breakthrough win last year en route to a fourth overall finish.

"I must admit this is something new to me," said the lady driver. "There is a lot more horse power in F3 racing than Formula BMW. It's quite a big leap actually. But I'm going to do whatever I can to catch up with the rest of the guys. In terms of winning, I guess we'll just have to see," she stressed.

Edgen Dy-Liacco, team owner of Speedtech Asia, welcomed Dela Merced's entry into his squad, saying: "We are very happy to have signed Gaby. I have seen her race in Formula Toyota and she demonstrated she possesses some talent."

DENVER'S Carmelo Anthony shoots off Indiana's David Harrison. AP

Pistons return to usual form

TORONTO—CHAUNCEY BILLUPS had 26 points and 10 assists as the league-leading Detroit Pistons defeated the Toronto Raptors, 105-98, in the NBA Wednesday at the Air Canada Center.

Tayshaun Prince added 21 points for the Pistons, who won their second straight after losing three of five games for the first time this season.

Detroit leads the NBA with a 51-12 record and the club looks to be rounding back into form after a sluggish stretch which saw the team lose 10 of its last 12 road games before Wednesday.

"I think we just came out with intensity for the first time in a while," said Antonio McDyess, who had 16 points off the bench.

"We play for the post-season but we've let a few games slip away from us recently. We needed to start winning again."

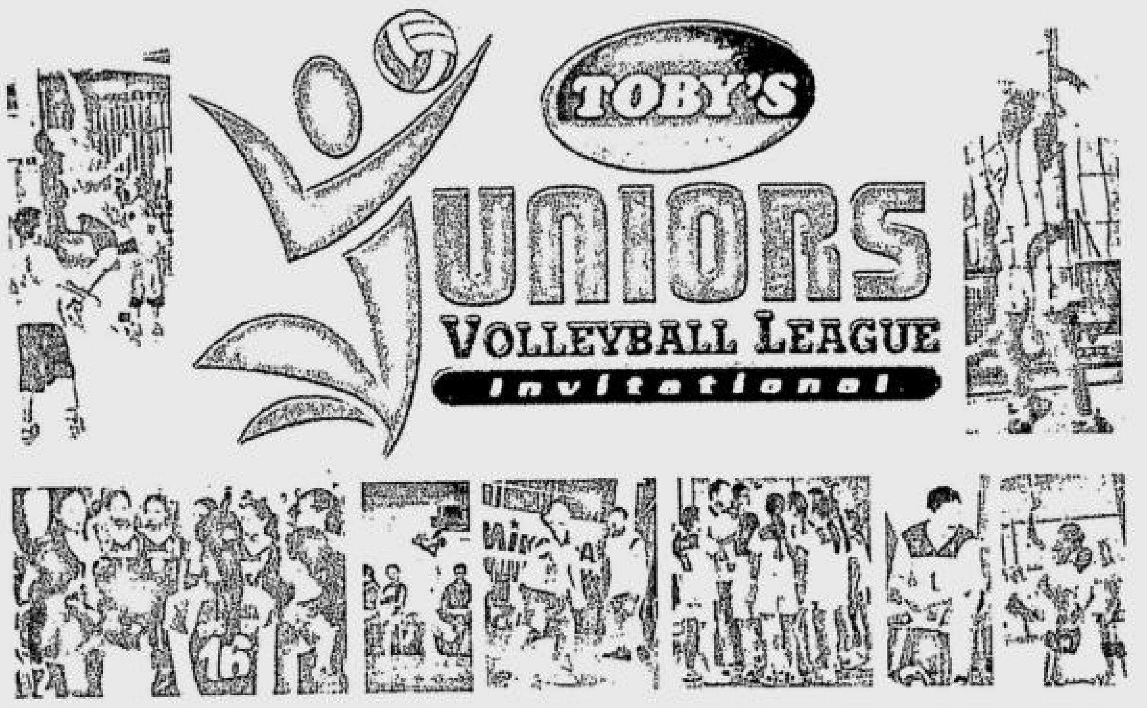
The Pistons trailed just once in the game, 15-14 early in the first quarter, but never trailed after that and always pulled away whenever the Raptors managed to get close in the second half.

In Indianapolis, Carmelo Anthony had 31 points, including the winning basket with 2.2 seconds left in regulation, as the Denver Nuggets edged the Indiana Pacers, 101-99. *Reuters*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Washington 107, Charlotte 99; Orlando 114, Utah 108 (OT); New York 121, Atlanta 117; New Jersey 78, Portland 65; Milwaukee 104, Chicago 88; Dallas 95, Houston 81; Phoenix 126, LA Clippers 95; LA Lakers 92, Minnesota 89.

- NBA on SOLAR SPORTS: 9 a.m.—Boston vs Miami (replay at 8 p.m.)

One of the earliest finals this schoolyear
will be on Saturday, March 18th.
And it won't be held inside a classroom.
Watch the Finals of



Scheduled Matches:
11:00am - St. Jude Catholic School vs. Univ. Perpetual Help Molino (Boys)
1:00pm - St. Jude Catholic School vs. Univ. Perpetual Help Molino (Girls)
2:00pm - De La Salle - Lipa vs. Quirino Elementary (Boys)
3:00pm - De La Salle - Lipa vs. Colegio San Agustin (Girls)

at the Talayan Sports Center
Talayan Village, Quezon City

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
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World Pool goes to Manila

CONSIDER THE PHILIPPINES' HOSTING OF the World Pool Championships in November a done deal.

Top officials of Matchroom Sport, headed by its chair British millionaire Barry Hearn and media director Luke Riches, as well as ESPN Star Sports executives are coming to Manila next week to finalize details of the contract reportedly running up to $1.1 million.

Yen Macabenta, chair of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, initiated the hosting of the annual event which traditionally lures the world's top 128 players from 40 countries.

Hearn bared his desire to stage the prestigious 9-ball event in Manila to Philippine pool godfather Aristeo "Putch" Puyat during the 2004 World Pool Championships in Chinese-Taipei, which also hosted the 2005 edition.

Filipino-Canadian Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan triumphed in 2004 while 16-year-old Taiwanese Wu Chia-ching won last year.

Among the venues being considered are the World Trade Center, the Philippine International Convention Center and Henry Sy's Mall of Asia.

BSCP president Ernesto Fajardo said hosting the event will be part of the Filipino cue masters' preparation for the 2006 Asian Games in Qatar. *Marlon Bernardino*

Cuba, Korea gain semis

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA—CUBA'S AMATEUR dynasty advanced to the World Baseball Classic semifinals while US major league millionaires received help from unbeaten South Korea to keep their title hopes alive.

South Korea defeated Japan, 2-1, here and the Cubans edged host Puerto Rico, 4-3, in second-round games Wednesday to join Dominican Republic in Saturday's semifinals at nearby San Diego. The championship game is set for Monday.

Lee Jong-Beom's two-run double in the eighth inning provided enough scoring for Korea's tournament-best pitching staff, although Tsuyoshi Nishioka homered in the ninth inning to put a scare into the Americans.

"It was important to beat Japan. It was sweet revenge," Lee said. "We will work even harder to be in the final." *AFP*

Hingis, Sharapova advance

INDIAN WELLS—THIRD SEED MARIA SHARAPOVA overpowered Germany's Anna-Lena Groenefeld, 6-1, 6-3, on Wednesday to reach a mouth-watering semifinal with Martina Hingis at the Pacific Life Open.

Former Swiss world No. 1 Hingis earlier eclipsed another Russian Dinara Safina, 6-3, 6-4, to reach the last four.

In the men's field, Andy Roddick's slump in form continued when he was knocked out in the fourth round by 24th seed Russian Igor Andreev.

The world No. 3 went down, 6-4 6-7, 6-1, and his conqueror will next face American James Blake, who advanced when Tommy Haas retired with food poisoning while trailing, 6-3, 3-0.

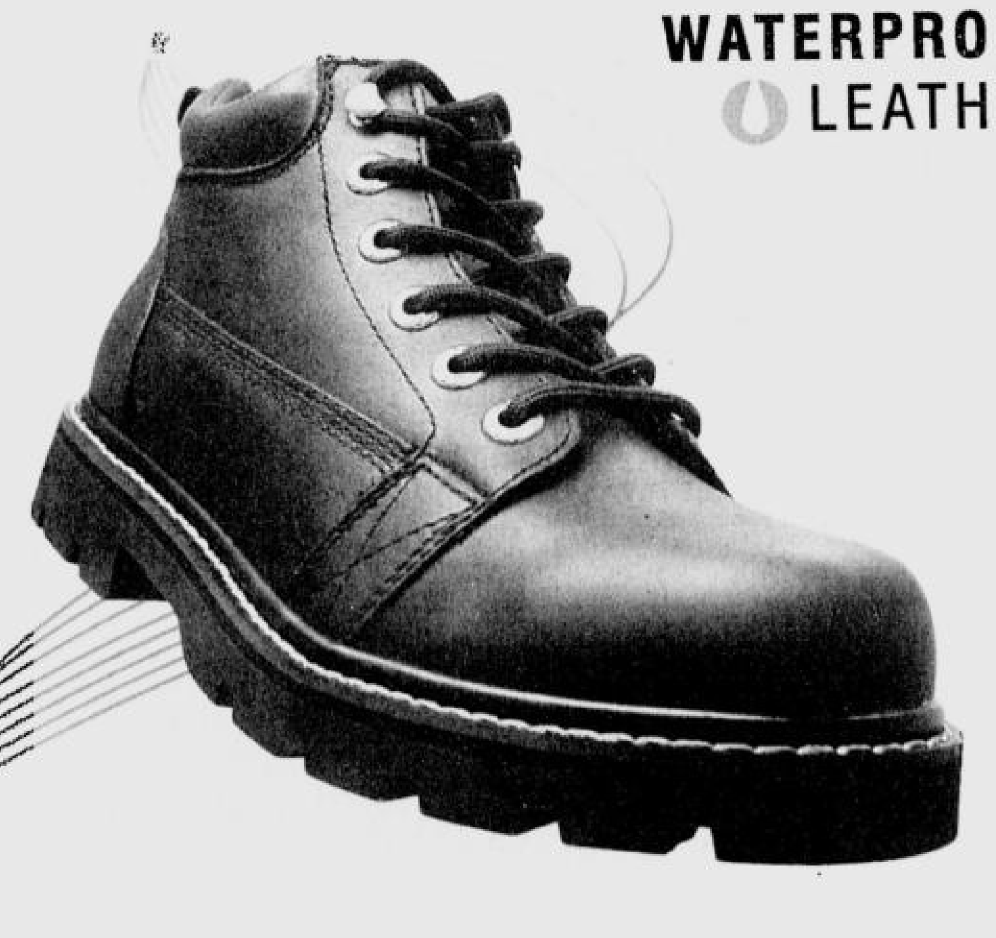
Top seed Roger Federer raced past France's Richard Gasquet, 6-3, 6-4, to book his place in the last eight, while No. 2 Rafael Nadal of Spain overcame a twisted ankle to beat 20th seed Sebastien Grosjean of France, 6-4, 6-2.

HINGIS AP

SHARAPOVA REUTERS

Federer will face sixth seed Ivan Ljubicic after the Croatian outclassed compatriot and 21st seed Mario Ancic, 6-3, 6-4.

In another upset, Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan upended fourth seed David Nalbandian of Argentina, 6-7, 6-3, 6-2. *Reuters*



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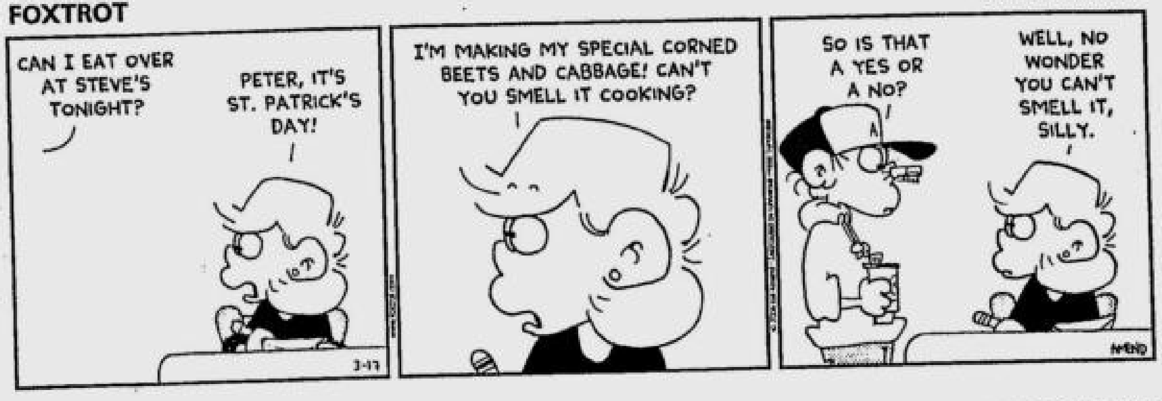
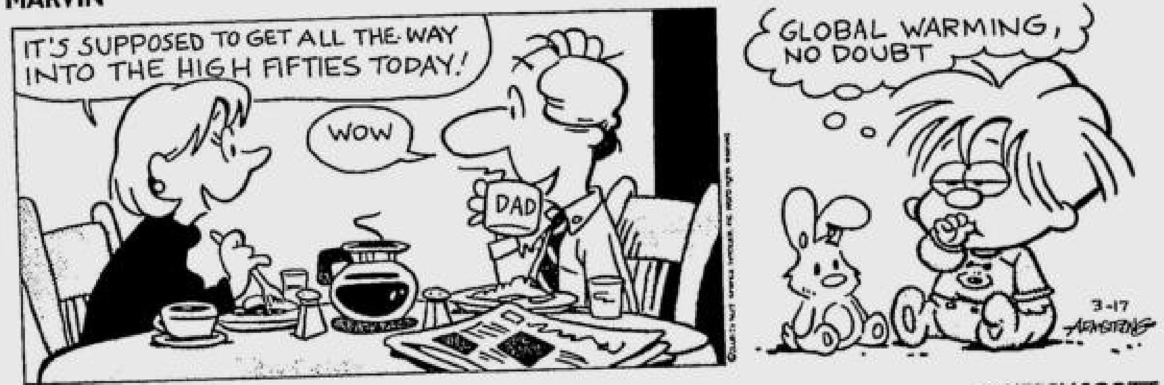
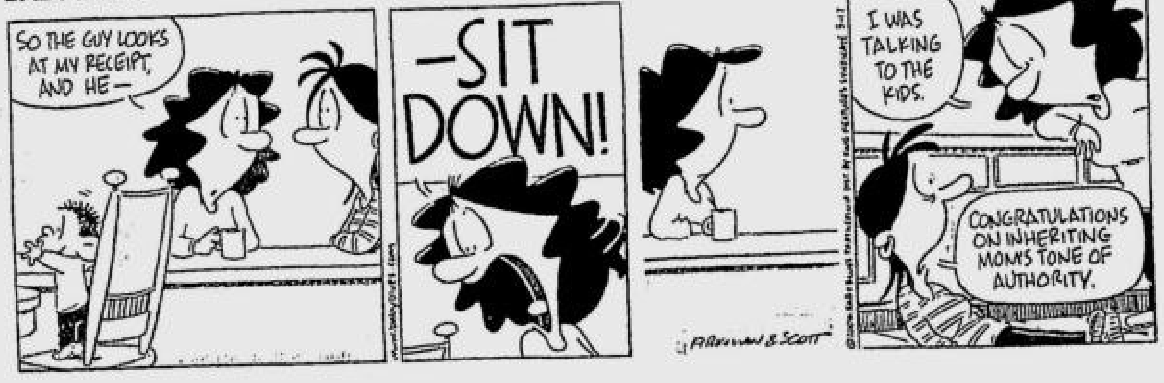
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


CAN I EAT OVER AT STEVE'S TONIGHT?
PETER, IT'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY!
I'M MAKING MY SPECIAL CORNED BEETS AND CABBAGE! CAN'T YOU SMELL IT COOKING?
SO IS THAT A YES OR A NO?
WELL, NO WONDER YOU CAN'T SMELL IT, SILLY.
3-17

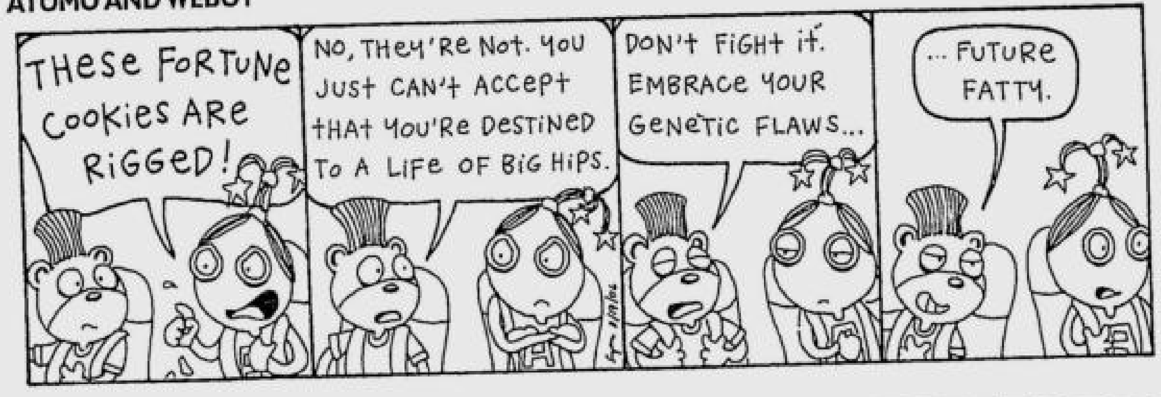
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IT'S SUPPOSED TO GET ALL THE WAY INTO THE HIGH FIFTIES TODAY!
WOW
DAD
GLOBAL WARMING, NO DOUBT
3-17

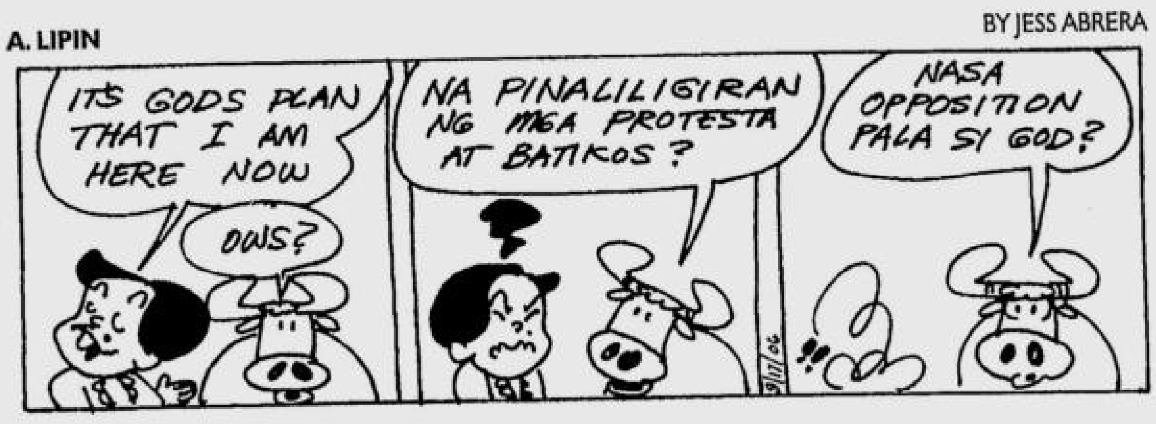
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


SO THE GUY LOOKS AT MY RECEIPT, AND HE—
—SIT DOWN!
I WAS TALKING TO THE KIDS.
CONGRATULATIONS ON INHERITING MOM'S TONE OF AUTHORITY.

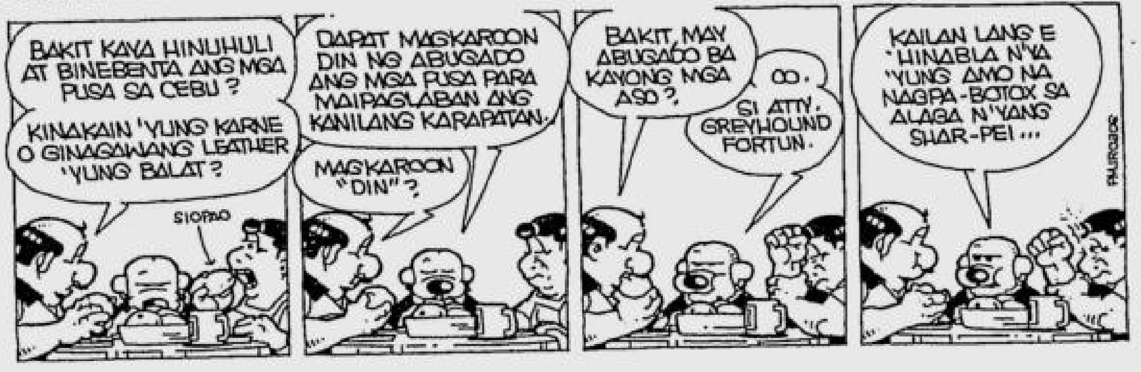
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THESE FORTUNE COOKIES ARE RIGGED!
NO, THEY'RE NOT. YOU JUST CAN'T ACCEPT THAT YOU'RE DESTINED TO A LIFE OF BIG HIPS.
DON'T FIGHT IT. EMBRACE YOUR GENETIC FLAWS...
... FUTURE FATTY.

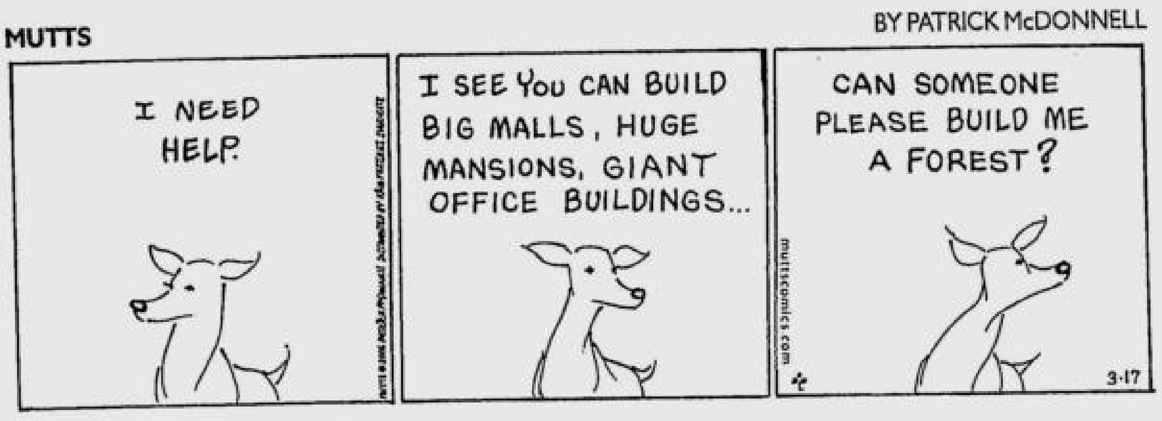
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


ITS GODS PLAN THAT I AM HERE NOW
OWS?
NA PINALILIGIRAN NG MGA PROTESTA AT BATIKOS?
NASA OPPOSITION PALA SI GOD?
!!

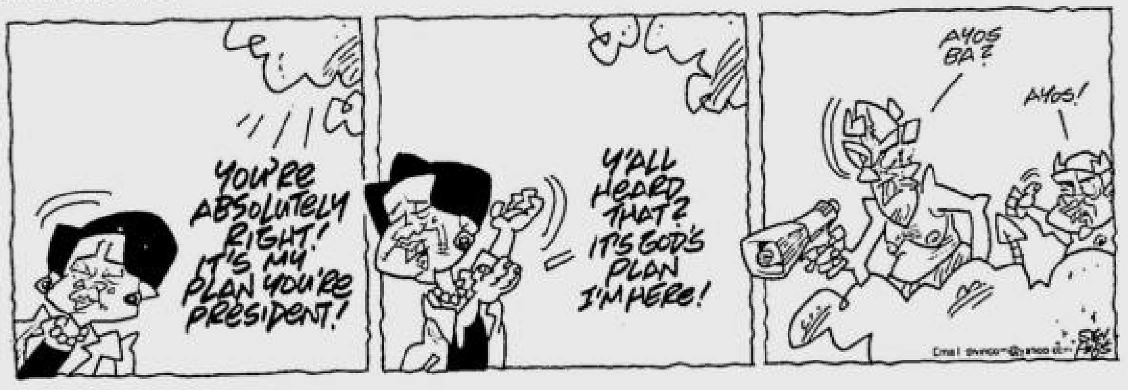
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT KAYA HINUHULI AT BINEBENTA ANG MGA PUSA SA CEBU?
KINAKAIN 'YUNG KARNE O GINAGAWANG LEATHER 'YUNG BALAT?
SIOPAO
DAPAT MAGKAROON DIN NG ABUGADO ANG MGA PUSA PARA MAIPAGLABAN ANG KANILANG KARAPATAN.
MAGKAROON "DIN"?
BAKIT, MAY ABUGADO BA KAYONG MGA ASO?
OO. SI ATTY. GREYHOUND FORTUN.
KAILAN LANG E HINABLA N'YA 'YUNG AMO NA NAGPA-BOTOX SA ALAGA N'YANG SHAR-PEI...

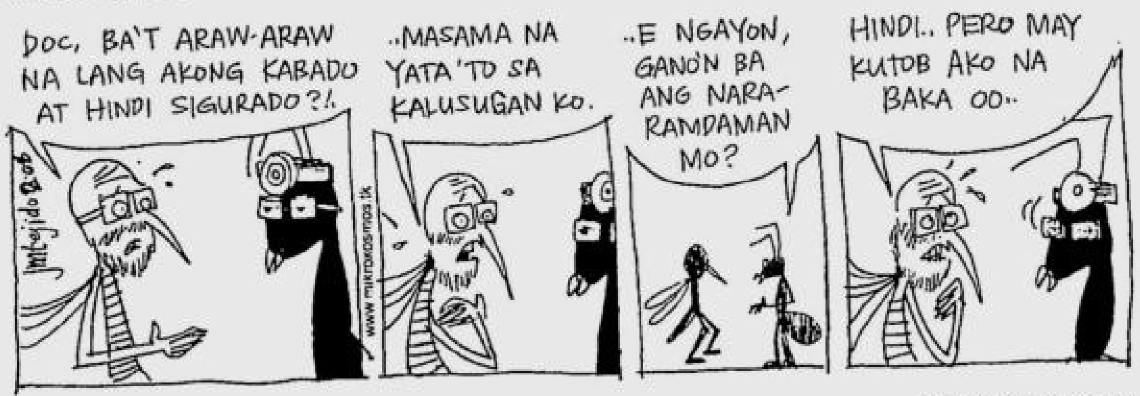
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I NEED HELP.
I SEE YOU CAN BUILD BIG MALLS, HUGE MANSIONS, GIANT OFFICE BUILDINGS...
CAN SOMEONE PLEASE BUILD ME A FOREST?
muttscomics.com
3-17

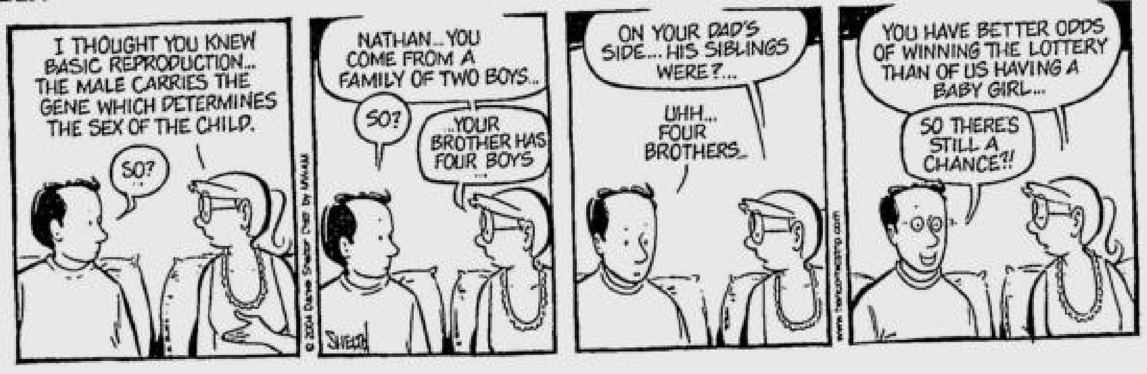
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! IT'S MY PLAN YOU'RE PRESIDENT!
Y'ALL HEARD THAT? IT'S GOD'S PLAN I'M HERE!
AYOS BA?
AYOS!

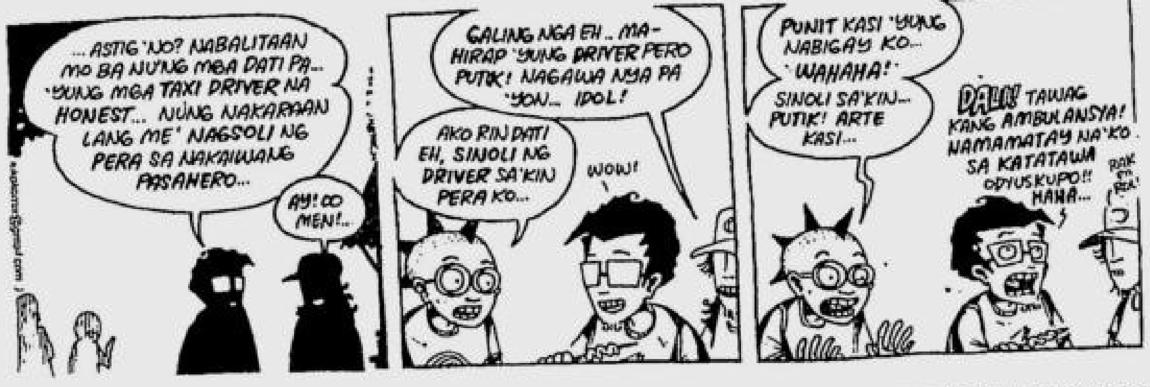
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


DOC, BA'T ARAW-ARAW NA LANG AKONG KABADO AT HINDI SIGURADO?!.
..MASAMA NA YATA 'TO SA KALUSUGAN KO.
..E NGAYON, GANO'N BA ANG NARARAMDAMAN MO?
HINDI.. PERO MAY KUTOB AKO NA BAKA OO..
www.mikrokosmos.tk

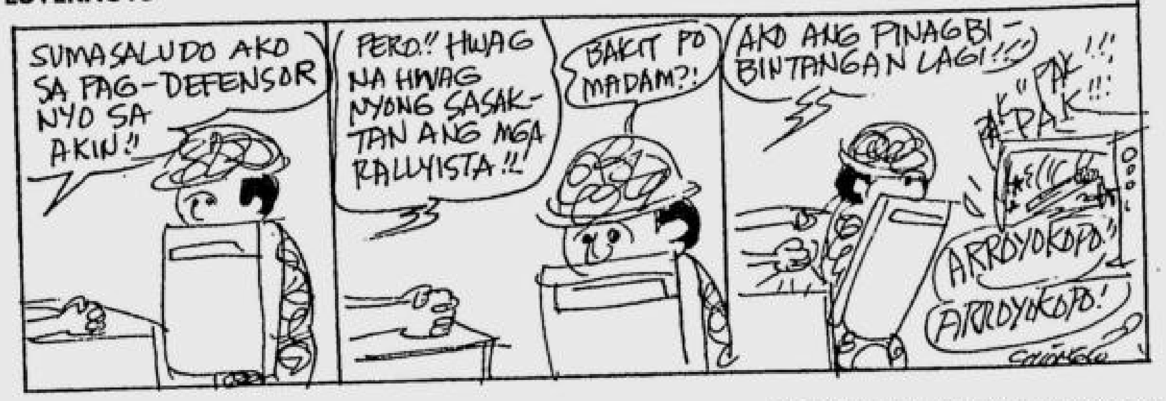
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I THOUGHT YOU KNEW BASIC REPRODUCTION... THE MALE CARRIES THE GENE WHICH DETERMINES THE SEX OF THE CHILD.
SO?
NATHAN... YOU COME FROM A FAMILY OF TWO BOYS..
SO?
..YOUR BROTHER HAS FOUR BOYS
ON YOUR DAD'S SIDE... HIS SIBLINGS WERE?...
UHH... FOUR BROTHERS..
YOU HAVE BETTER ODDS OF WINNING THE LOTTERY THAN OF US HAVING A BABY GIRL...
SO THERE'S STILL A CHANCE?!

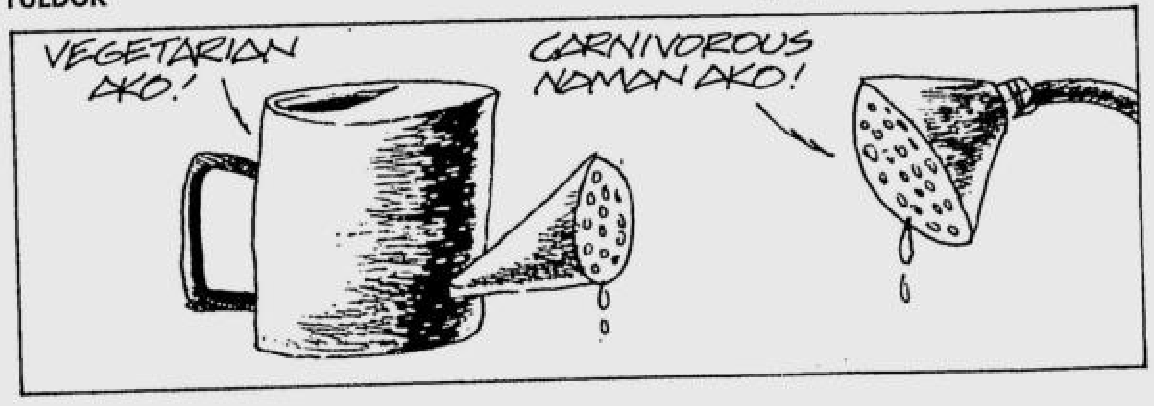
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


...ASTIG 'NO? NABALITAAN MO BA NUNG MGA DATI PA... 'YUNG MGA TAXI DRIVER NA HONEST... NUNG NAKARAAN LANG ME' NAGSOLI NG PERA SA NAKAIWANG PASAHERO...
AY! OO MEN!..
GALING NGA EH.. MAHIRAP 'YUNG DRIVER PERO PUTIK! NAGAWA NYA PA 'YON... IDOL!
AKO RIN DATI EH, SINOLI NG DRIVER SA'KIN PERA KO...
WOW!
PUNIT KASI 'YUNG NABIGAY KO... WAHAHA!
SINOLI SA'KIN... PUTIK! ARTE KASI...
DALI! TAWAG KANG AMBULANSYA! NAMAMATAY NA'KO SA KATATAWA ODYUSKUPO!! HAHA...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SUMASALUDO AKO SA PAG-DEFENSOR NYO SA AKIN!!
PERO!! HWAG NA HWAG NYONG SASAKTAN ANG MGA RALLYISTA!!
BAKIT PO MADAM?!
AKO ANG PINAGBIBINTANGAN LAGI!!
PAK!! PAK!!
ARROYOKOPO!
ARROYOKOPO!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


VEGETARIAN AKO!
CARNIVOROUS NAMAN AKO!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're expressive in a sensitive way. You have a gentle soul. You become completely involved in whatever you are doing. (You're passionate!) You love anything new and fresh. You hate to be pinned down or captive in any situation. You like to be socially involved. An exciting year awaits you—full of new, fresh opportunities and open doors.
Birthdate of: Gary Sinise, actor; Rob Lowe, actor; Nat King Cole, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Don't listen to any feelings you have of self-doubt or inner anxiety today. This is just a passing thing. Sometimes things trigger emotions that we have long buried.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Avoid arguments with friends and groups today. It won't be a pretty picture. People are very hotheaded and emotional today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Power struggles with authority figures are almost inevitable today. Your best bet is simply to avoid parents, bosses and authority figures. If you do encounter them, they will be powerful!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Avoid political and religious arguments—especially with people at work. Someone is hot under the collar today! (Hopefully, it's not you.) Don't try to convince anybody of anything.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Somebody you share something with might lose something or break something today. Or you might lose something. (This is definitely a day where loss can be experienced.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Try to be patient and diplomatic with partners and friends. Arguments can break out over anything. Somebody wants to make radical changes. (It could be you.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Expect machinery breakdowns and the like at work today. In fact, you might even feel that your health is breaking down in some fashion. It's really just a reality check.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Parents must be patient with children today. Don't let anything turn into Bad Day at Black Rock. Children learn most by imitating you, not by listening to what you say.

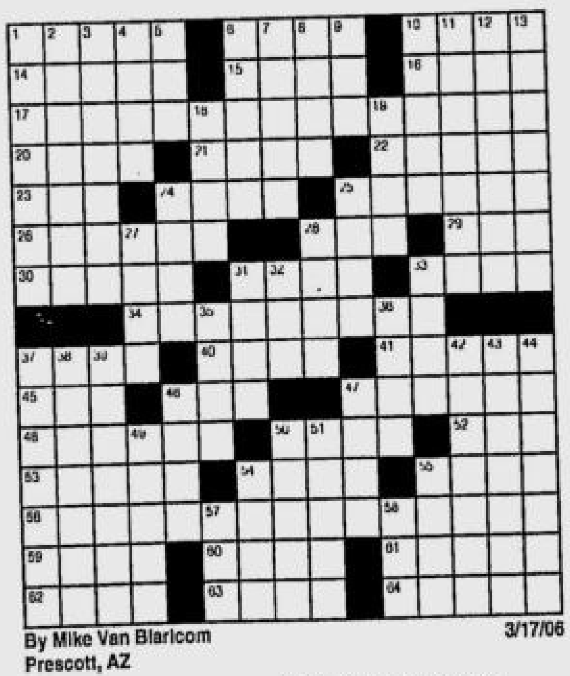
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Power struggles with family members are likely today. Frustrations arise because machinery—small appliances, etc.—breaks down today. Consider this a test of your maturity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The harder you try to persuade others to agree with you, the more they will resist you. That's because Pluto is in the picture today. Pluto always rises to meet the opposition.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Avoid arguments about money and possessions. Today is all about letting go of stuff that is no longer useful. Maybe you need to let go of some of your possessions.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's difficult to deal with people in authority today. They may demand that you account for yourself in some way. (Nobody likes to hear this.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Mike Van Blaricom
Prescott, AZ
3/17/06

ACROSS
1 ___ and bounds
6 1989 Nobel winner
10 Try out for weight
14 Skirt or duck
15 Marsh bird
16 Arab leader
17 Samantha Taggart of "ER"
20 Water/wine transition
21 Punches
22 Little bits
23 ATM maker
24 Anear
25 Boiling pot
26 Godlike
28 Wickedness
29 Common Market abbr.
30 Spore nursery
31 Nitwit
33 Formerly, formerly
34 Cote de Pablo of "NCIS"
37 Italian fascist
40 Helps out
41 Judgments
45 Hydrocarbon suffix
46 Pack animal
47 Star in Aquila
48 Abrasion
50 Fixative
52 Neckline shape
53 Graff of "Mr. Belvedere"
54 3rd baseman Rodriguez
55 Puerto ___
56 Dr. Albert Robbins of "CSI"
59 Work for
60 See: Lat.
61 Too weird
62 32-card game
63 Hip ending?
64 Evidences sadness

DOWN
1 Dillon of "Close Encounters..."
2 Manifests
3 Of mystic Hinduism
4 Caribbean taro
5 Yellow or Red
6 Diet guru Jenny
7 Third of nine
8 Tupperware pieces
9 Pub brew
10 Spartan serf
11 Energy source
12 Concerts' last selections
13 Divide into three
18 Classy
19 Claim on income
24 Unless, in law
25 Dnieper port
27 Bomb detonator
28 Hot tubs
31 Lecture platform
32 Fluky
33 Put in other words
35 Flower holder
36 Like a couch potato
37 Hankerings
38 Expose, as a cover-up
39 Parts of brains
42 Sturgeon roe: var.
43 Man's bar?
44 Iris rings
46 Mimic
47 BMW rival
49 In regard to
50 Test score
51 Paramour
54 Mine entrance
55 Korean leader Syngman
57 VCRs' go-withs
58 Dawn moisture

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	R	A	P	■	W	A	Y	S	■	S	P	A	T
T	R	A	L	A	■	I	B	E	T	■	A	R	G	O
R	O	W	D	Y	■	S	E	A	R	■	L	E	O	N
O	N	E	A	R	T	H	T	H	E	R	E	S	■	■
P	E	R	■	O	R	E	S	■	T	I	M	E	R	S
■	■	■	S	L	E	D	■	L	C	D	■	R	E	A
S	T	A	P	L	E	■	N	O	H	E	A	V	E	N
A	R	N	O	■	■	E	E	L	■	■	V	E	S	T
B	U	T	T	H	E	R	E	■	S	P	I	R	E	A
L	E	I	■	O	L	E	■	G	L	A	D	■	■	■
E	S	P	A	N	A	■	C	O	O	S	■	A	B	S
■	■	A	R	E	P	I	E	C	E	S	O	F	I	T
D	E	S	I	■	S	O	D	A	■	E	M	I	L	E
A	L	T	A	■	E	W	E	R	■	L	A	R	G	E
B	I	O	S	■	D	A	R	T	■	S	N	E	E	R

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3/17/06

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Blame it on the bossa nova!

Sergio Mendes, in Manila for a one-night gig, answers questions about his stunning five-decade career

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, AN FM radio listener in these parts is sure to chance upon a Sergio Mendes recording.

That's because radio programmers feel that these tunes—"The Look of Love," "Where is the Love," "Hey Look at the Sun" and "Waters of March," among others—though not Mendes originals, have been delivered in a specific style that makes people feel good.

Mendes first became famous worldwide as band leader of the Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66—named after his country and the year his record label, A&M, released the album that yielded the hit "Mas Que Nada," featuring the distinctive vocals of American Lani Hall.

From then on, Mendes' musical touring act would be regarded as a launching pad of talented vocalists and a great interpreter of songs. He himself has written several originals, notably another Pinoy FM radio staple, "Waiting for Love."

The cynical might dismiss Mendes as a 65-year-old has-been plucked out of retirement for old fans to reminisce on retro music. That would be terribly wrong. The late 1990s lounge music revival created a resurgence of respect for his extensive body of work, especially his bossa nova period.

In fact, he has a brand-new CD, "Timeless," which highlights collaborations with the likes of Black Eyed Peas' will.i.am.

At the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on Wednesday, the Araneta Group of Companies presented Mendes to promote his one-night concert tomorrow at the Big Dome.

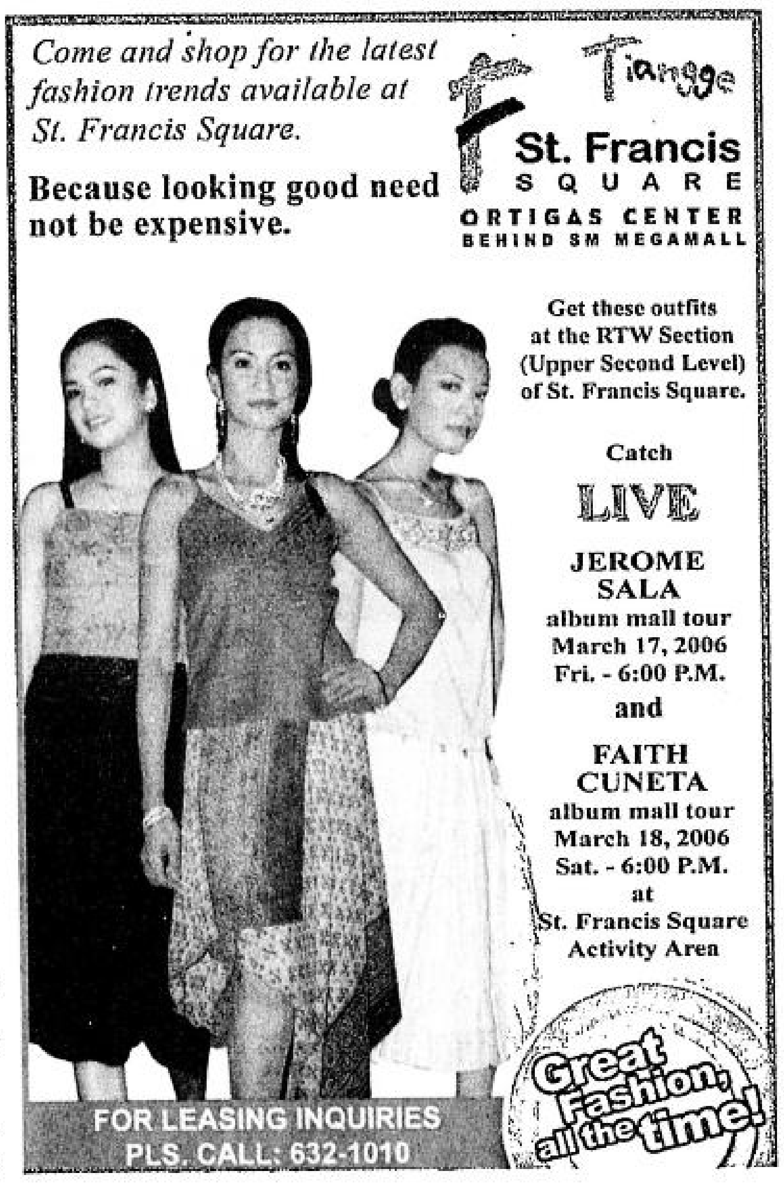
Jet-lagged, the man tried hard not to be annoyed by our questions, which forced him to recall moments in a career that began in the clubs of Rio de Janeiro in the late '50s, and being mentored by Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Tell us about the club scene in Rio when you started.

Those were wonderful times! I played at the Copacabana and other clubs.

What's so special about bossa nova that made

BLAME/ A2-2



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Great Fashion, all the time!

New MMFF rules out

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NEW RULES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FOR the 2006 Metro Manila Film Festival.

INQUIRER Entertainment obtained a "summary of the revisions" made in the MMFF regulations—foremost of which is that all 10 entries will open simultaneously on Dec. 25.

"All at the same time," confirmed Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority, which runs the annual event.

Deadline for the submission of screenplays was extended to May 15 from April 30, according to Rolly Josef, Fernando's chief of staff and a member of the selection, screening and executive committees.

The deadline extension was affirmed by Manny Nuqui and Ric Camaligan, festival execom members.

Another revision is that "applicants should show proof of financial capability to produce the required prints and undertake promotions for the film."

Josef explained that this rule was added because last year, at least two producers failed to submit the minimum number of prints.

(According to Camaligan, each producer needs "50 to 60 prints" so that his movie can be shown nationwide.)

Festival suffers

The same producers also didn't have sufficient budget to promote their movies, said Josef.

"Two producers had to take out loans," Josef said. "It would be to the detriment of the festival, if an applicant didn't have the capa-

NEW/ A2-3

Are dark spots worrying you? Underarms, Nape, Groin & Freckles
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Ellen's

Worried About
Acne Scars,
Uneven
Skin Tone, &
Open Pores?
with
DIAMOND FACIAL LASER TREATMENT
all your worries are gone. . .

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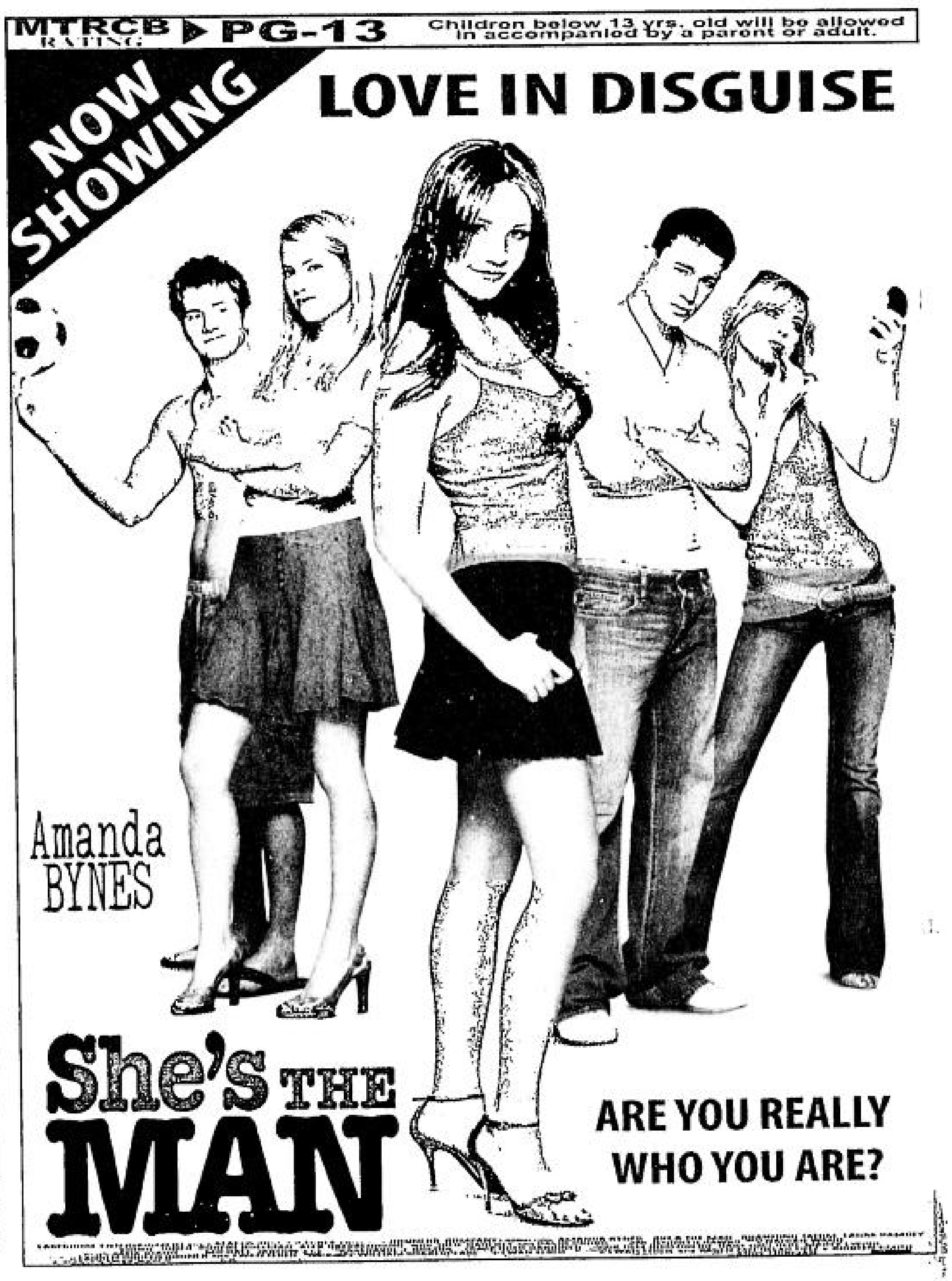

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Blame it on . . .

From page A2-1

it popular worldwide?

The music has great melodies. Memorable, timeless melodies.

Who do you consider as timeless artists?

Jobim, Cole Porter, the Beatles—master songwriters of timeless melodies. Also, Billie Holiday. Listening to her sing makes you lose all sense of time.

Your very first major US tour was with Frank Sinatra.

Yes, in 1968 and again [we toured] in the 1980s. It was a great experience. He's my favorite singer of all time.

Who are your favorite female singers?

Lani Hall, of course… Dianne Reeves… And my wife! For me she's the greatest! Her name is Gracini-ah.

Your band launched big talents. Anyone who stands out?

Again, Lani Hall, and Joe Pizzulo, who sang the lead in "Never Gonna Let You Go."

How come you never sang in your albums?

I'm really a piano player. The keyboards, that's my thing.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
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CINEMA 1 SHE'S THE MAN 11:35 , 2:20 , 5:00 , 7:40 , 10:20
CINEMA 2 HOSTEL 10:50 , 1:05 , 3:20, 5:35 , 7:50 , 10:10 R18
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 V FOR VENDETTA 11:15 , 2:05 , 5:00, 7:45, 10:30 R13
CINEMA 4 SHAGGY DOG 10:40, 1:00 , 3:20 , 5:40 , 8:00 , 10:20 GP
CINEMA 5 V FOR VENDETTA 10:40 , 1:30 , 4:20, 7:10 , 10:00 R13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM		
MARCH 18 ,2006	VINA M., RACHEL A.,GENEVA C	9:00PM
MARCH 30 ,2006	RICO J. PUNO	9:00PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS		
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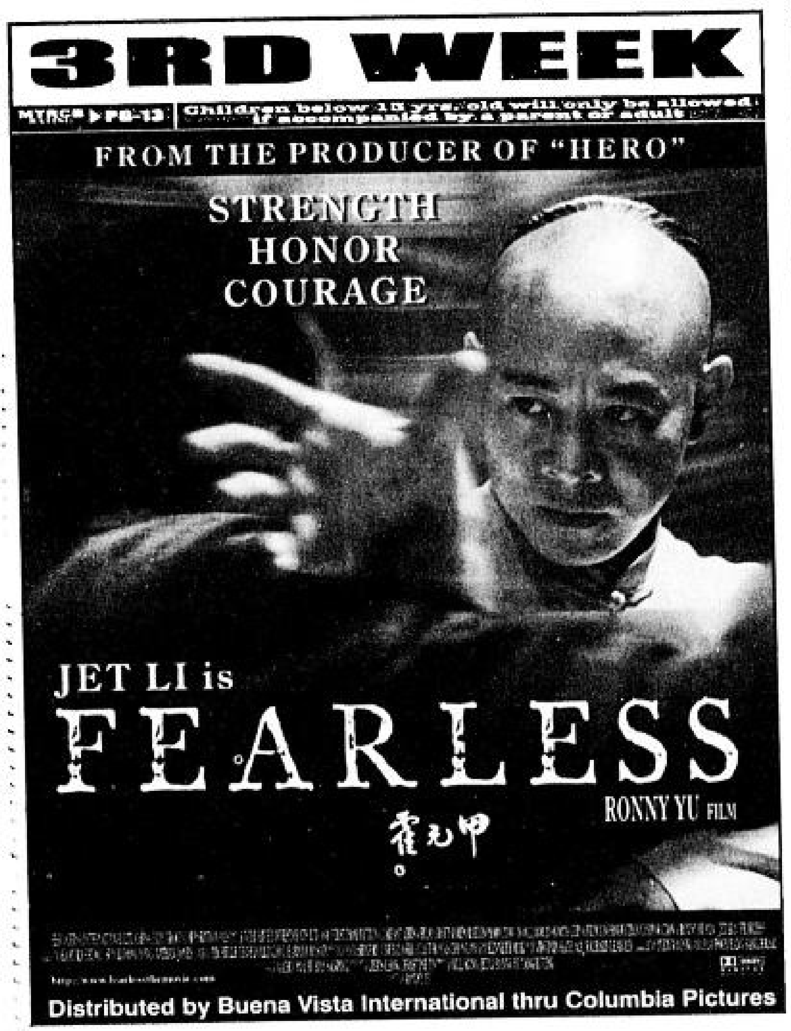
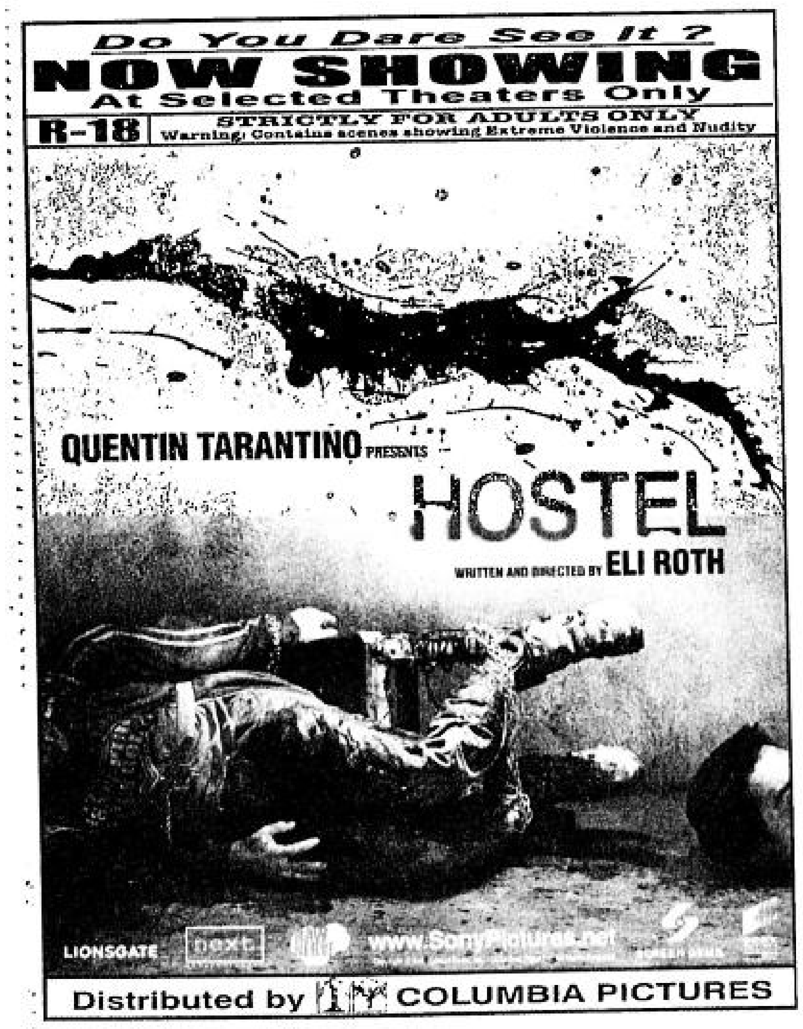

3RD WEEK
MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "HERO"
STRENGTH
HONOR
COURAGE
JET LI is
FEARLESS
RONNY YU FILM
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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THE REST OF HER LIFE
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1	SHAGGY DOG 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:30, 11:00	GP
2	V FOR VENDETTA 11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:00	R-13
3	SHE'S THE MAN 12:35, 3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:35	PG-13
4	HOSTEL 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	R-18

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 V FOR VENDETTA
MTRCB: R-13
1.00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 LMF
2 SHAGGY DOG
MTRCB. GP
12.20, 2.45, 5.10, 7.35, 10.00 LMF
3 HOSTEL
MTRCB. R-18
12.40, 3.00, 5:20, 740, 1000
4 SHE'S THE MAN
MTRCB. PG-13
2:00, 4:25, 6:50, 9:15
PREMIERE THEATRE 16 BLOCKS / CRASH
MTRCB. PG-13 4 10, 9 00 / MTRCB. R-13 1:50, 6 30
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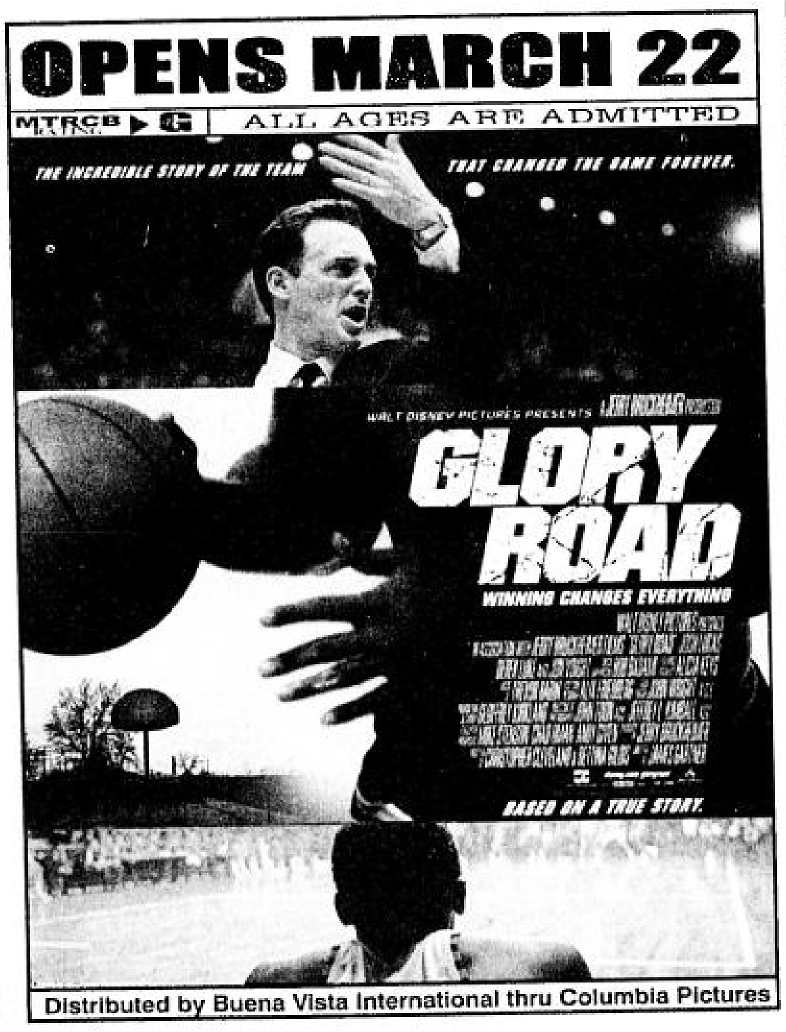
OPENS MARCH 22
MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE TEAM THAT CHANGED THE GAME FOREVER.
WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS
GLORY ROAD
WINNING CHANGES EVERYTHING
BASED ON A TRUE STORY.
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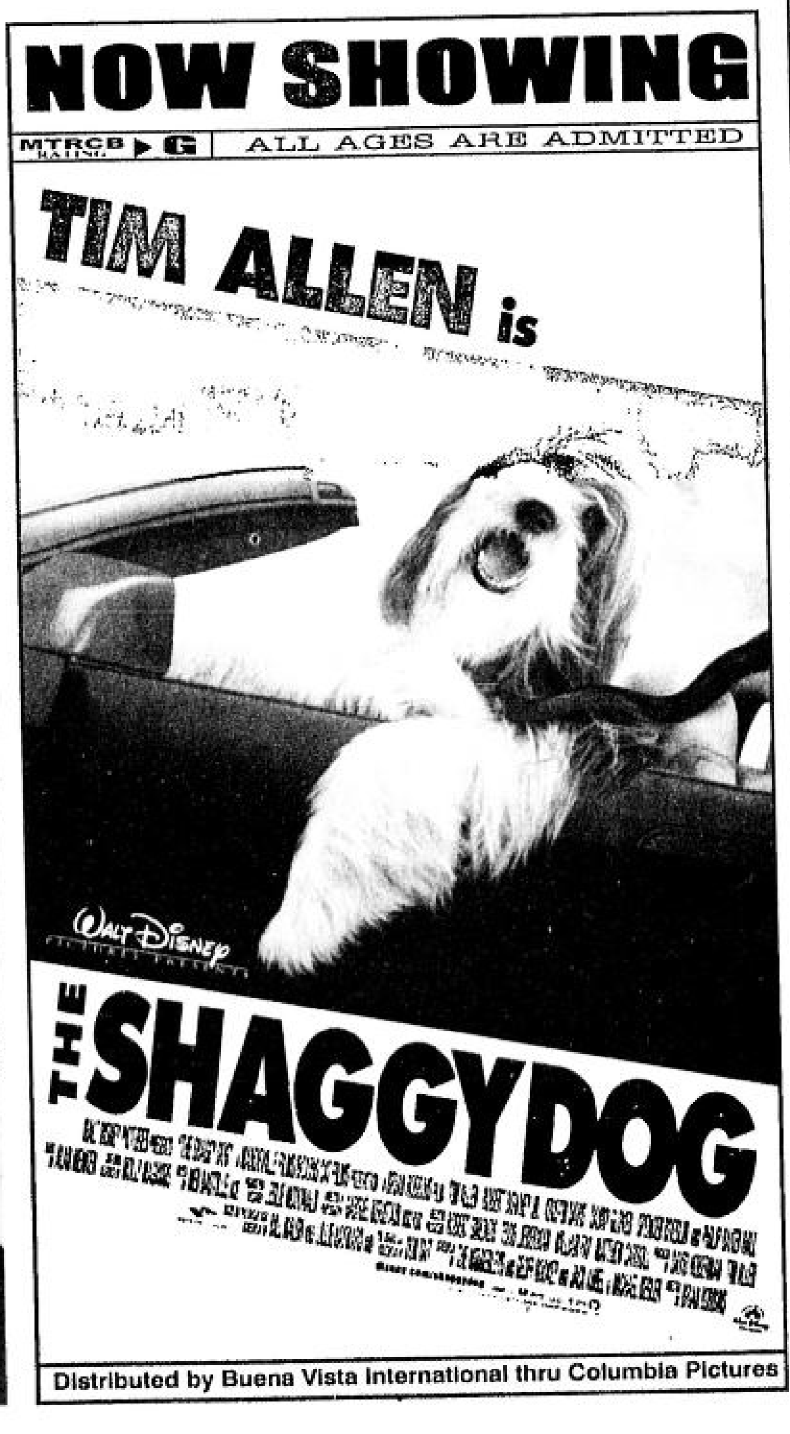
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
TIM ALLEN is
Walt Disney
THE SHAGGY DOG
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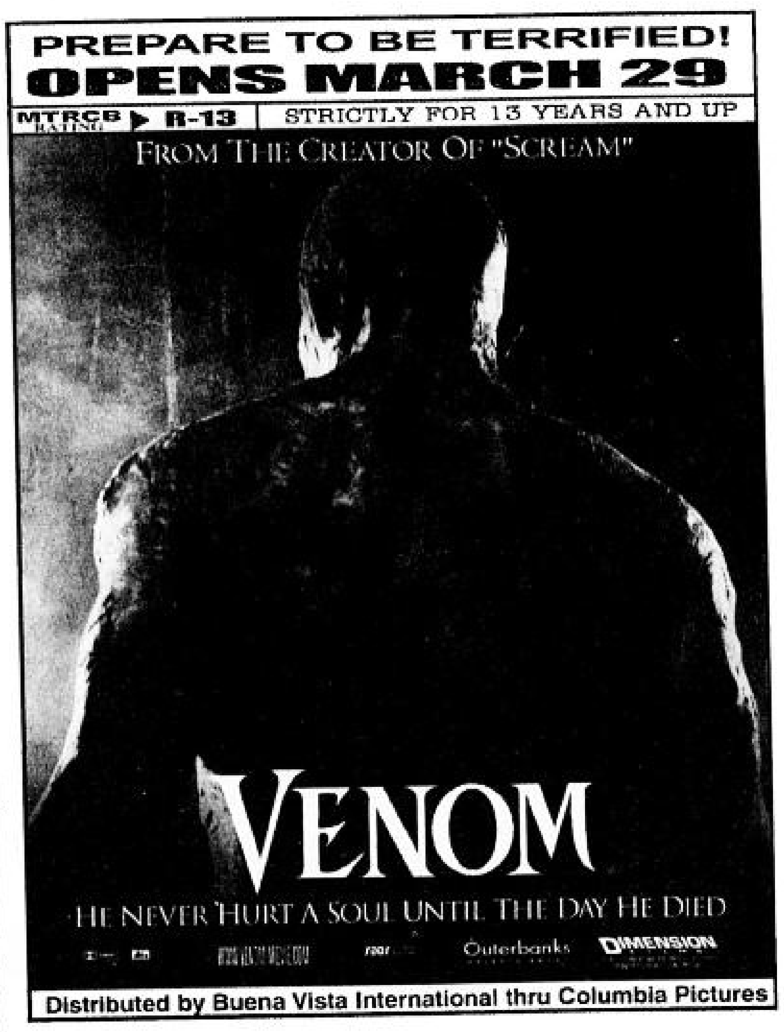
PREPARE TO BE TERRIFIED!
OPENS MARCH 29
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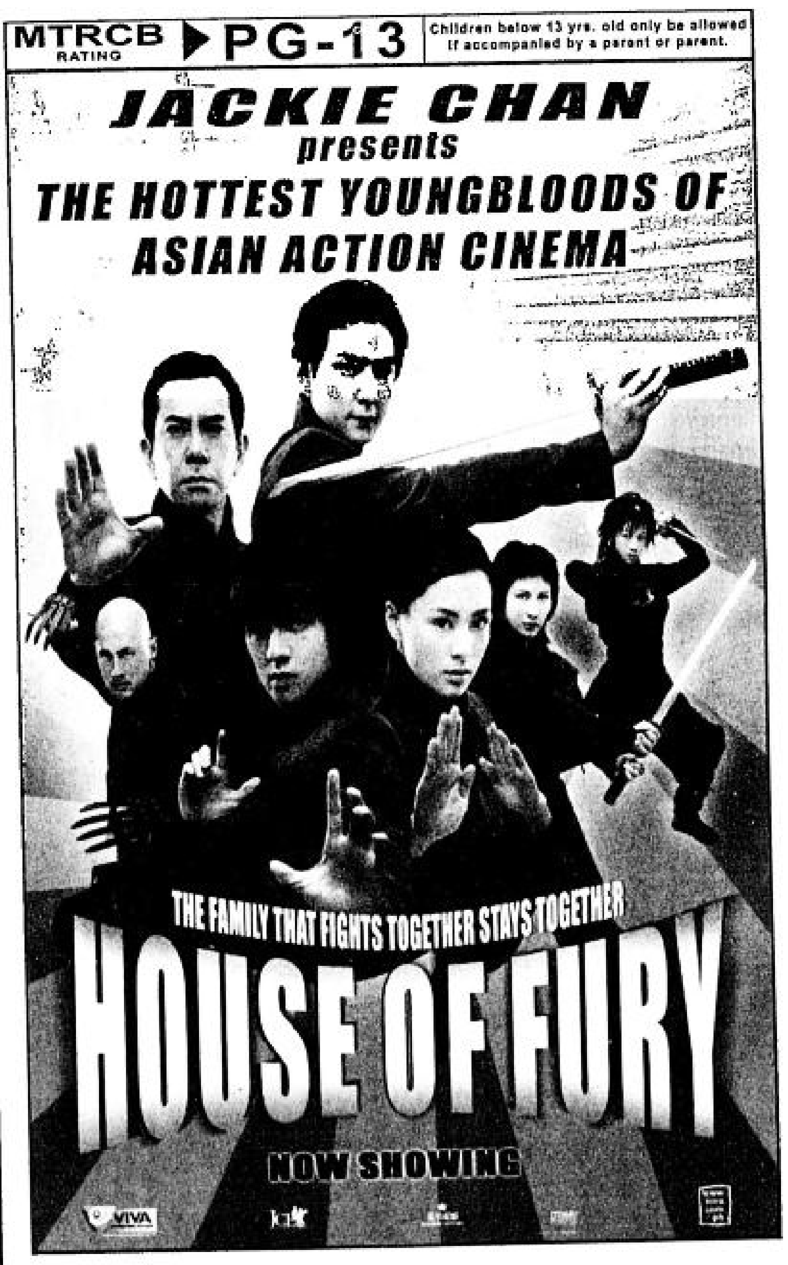
FROM THE CREATOR OF "SCREAM"
VENOM
HE NEVER HURT A SOUL UNTIL THE DAY HE DIED
Outerbanks
DIMENSION
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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THE FAMILY THAT FIGHTS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER
HOUSE OF FURY
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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CASANOVA R13 12:00,2:25,4:50, 7:15,9:40	SHE'S THE MAN 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	SHAGGY DOG G 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:20
16 BLOCKS PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50	HOSTEL R18 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	V FOR VENDETTA R13 1:50,4;40,7:30,10:20

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March 18-19
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POWER PLANT MALL

New rules…

From page A2-1

bility to finish his entry, turn over the required number of prints and promote his movie well."

Josef reiterated that this new rule was meant to "help small producers, so that they wouldn't be clobbered by the big ones at the box office."

One star

Two other new regulations limit two entries per genre and one (different) star per film, but producers are still encouraged to submit as many entries as possible.

Josef clarified that the "one star per movie" rule was an old regulation and was designed to ensure the entries' commercial viability. "Two movies with the same lead star might cancel each other out at the tills."

The same rationale is behind the limit on the number of films per genre.

3 genres

Said Josef: "Strictly speaking, there are only three genres, but in our rules, we've expanded that to seven."

The new MMFF "summary of rules," however, yielded nine genres—action, drama, comedy, horror, adventure, suspense, science fiction, fantasy or musical.

In the selection of entries, the highest percentage (40 percent each) is reserved to commercial viability and universal or global appeal and the remaining 20 percent to Filipino cultural and/or historical value.

Subsidy

Unlike last year's incentive which was pegged at P750,000, the producers' subsidy for 2006, "shall be determined subject to the availability of funds and the income from the festival."

Whether old or new, Josef said, the MMFF rules are meant to ensure the festival's financial success—especially since Chair Fernando is aiming for an almost 100 percent increase in grosses from last year's earnings—or a total of P5 billion in 2006.

Josef concluded: "Chair Fernando believes that if a movie is not good then people will simply not patronize it."

FEEDBACK

Kudos to Ruffa

From Brad Aquino (brad2004pitt@yahoo.com), Maybunga, Pasig City

It was great for Ruffa and her friends to think of a "celebrity *tiangge*" for Leyte. But why should visitors have to pay a P300 entrance fee? That is too much. I hope they can lower that. I know that the intention is to help, but P300 may be all that some people can shop with.

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MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9116

1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN • THX
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
2 V FOR VENDETTA
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
3 HOUSE OF FURY
1:20 3:30 5:40 7.50 10:00
4 SHAGGY DOG
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
5 HOSTEL
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
6 SHE'S THE MAN
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
7 DATE MOVIE
1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:45
8 BREAKING NEWS
1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00
9 16 BLOCKS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 THE DARK
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 V FOR VENDETTA 12:35 3:40 6:40 9:50
2 16 BLOCKS 12:20 2:30
THE DARK 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 SHE'S THE MAN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
4 HOUSE OF FURY
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 HOSTEL
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 SHAGGY DOG
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
7 DATE MOVIE
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE DARK
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 V FOR VENDETTA
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00
3 HOSTEL
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05
4 DATE MOVIE
12:15 2:00 3:45 5:30 7:15 9:00
5 BREAKING NEWS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
6 SHAGGY DOG
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
7 16 BLOCKS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
8 SHE'S THE MAN
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
4 HOSTEL
5 HOUSE OF FURY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 FEARLESS
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 SHAGGY DOG

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Leo is a 21-year old co-ed student in a prestigious college. He dreams of making and starring in his own "dirty movie" and becomes obsessed with the idea. Leo eggs her girlfriend Claire to be part of the video. She hesitates but gives in to the idea soon enough, when she finds her most compelling reason in the person of a sexy girl named Miles.

MARCH 22 to 28
MTRCB Rating: R-18

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1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 TIGER BLADE
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 AEON FLUX

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1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 HOSTEL
3 YOURS, MINE AND OURS
4 AEON FLUX

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 CASANOVA
2 LAST HOLIDAY
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
4 HOSTEL
5 V FOR VENDETTA

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 MURDER
4 AEON FLUX

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-3188

1 CASANOVA
2 HOSTEL
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 LAST HOLIDAY
6 TIGER BLADE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 16 BLOCKS
2 HOSTEL
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 CASANOVA
6 V FOR VENDETTA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 NEW WORLD
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
5 MURDER
6 FEARLESS

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 16 BLOCKS
3 CASANOVA
4 HOSTEL
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
6 FEARLESS

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METRO MANILA

THE PODIUM CINEMA

V FOR VENDETTA
12:10 FS / 12:35 MF / 03:20
06:05 / 08:20 LFS
08:50 LMF / 11:05 END
SHAGGY DOG
02:00 FS / 02:25 MF / 04:035
06:45 / 08:25 LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:40 END

SM MEGACINEMA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
10:30FS / 11:00 MF / 01:45
04:30/ 07:15 / 09:30LFS /
09:55 LMF / 12:10 END
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 FEARLESS
4 RENOVATION
5 THE DARK
6 HOUSE OF FURY
7 BREAKING NEWS
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 16 BLOCKS
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 CASANOVA
12 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 RESERVED
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 AEON FLUX
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 CASANOVA

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 BREAKING NEWS
2 YOUR'S MINE & OURS
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 16 BLOCKS
5 FINAL DESTINATION 3
6 FEARLESS
7 V FOR VENDETTA
8 SHAGGY DOG
9 SHE'S THE MAN
10 CLOSE TO YOU
11 THE DARK
12 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 16 BLOCKS
4 SHE'S THE MAN
5 FEARLESS
6 THE DARK
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 HOUSE OF FURY
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 CASANOVA

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 THE DARK
4 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 16 BLOCKS
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY MANILA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 UNDERCLASS MAN
4 FEARLESS
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 16 BLOCKS
7 BREAKING NEWS
8 THE DARK
9 FINAL DESTINATION 3
10 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
11 CLOSE TO YOU
12 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 RESERVED
4 16 BLOCKS
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 SHAGGY DOG
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 THE DARK
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 16 BLOCKS
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 THE DARK

SM CITY SUCAT

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 16 BLOCKS
4 CLOSE TO YOU

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SM CITY BAGUIO

1 NEW WORLD
2 CASANOVA
3 YOURS, MINE & OURS
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY MARILAO

1 CASANOVA
2 SYRIANA
3 16 BLOCKS
4 YOURS, MINE & OURS

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 BLOODFIST 2050
2 YOURS, MINE & OURS
3 FEARLESS
4 SYRIANA

SM CITY BACOOR

1 THE DARK
2 16 BLOCKS
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 FEARLESS
8 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 LAST HOLIDAY
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 AEON FLUX
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 CASANOVA
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 FEARLESS
6 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY LUCENA

1 FEARLESS
2 YOURS, MINE & OURS
3 SAW 2
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

SM CITY MOLINO

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 THE DARK
3 TIGER BLADE
4 FEARLESS

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
12:00FS / 12:18 / 02:36
04:54 / 07: 12 / 09:18 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:35 END
2 V FOR VENDETTA
11:15FS / 11:30 MF
02:00 / 04:30
07:00 / 09:21 LFS /
09:30 LMF / 11:50 END
3 NEW WORLD
11:15FS / 11:30 MF
02:00 / 04:30
07:00 / 09:20 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:50 END
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
5 GOAL
6 16 BLOCKS
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 FEARLESS

SM CITY ILOILO

1 CASANOVA
2 RESERVED
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 FEARLESS
5 V FOR VENDETTA
6 UNDERCLASS MAN
7 RESERVED
8 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY DAVAO

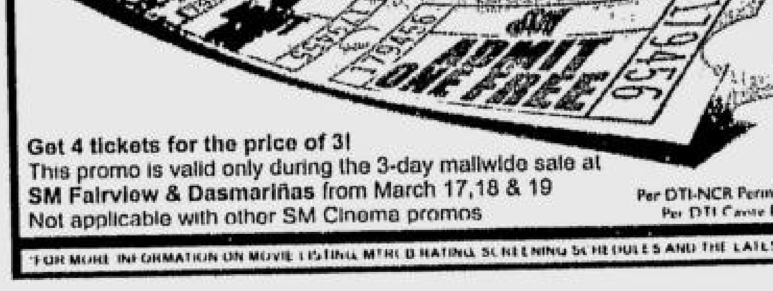
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 FEARLESS
3 FIREWALL
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 AEON FLUX
6 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 SYRIANA
2 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 PINK PANTHER

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

One, two, three, FREE!



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The sparkling Ms Portman

From page A2-5

dressed on the red carpet. Are there no conflicts between these two lifestyles?

When you're lucky in life, I don't think you should feel guilty and not take advantage of it. [I] enjoy the fun and beauty of clothes as art or whatever but don't get wrapped up in it. All my shoes are from Target (laughs). I like Stella McCartney because she does non-leather stuff.

How did you become a vegetarian?

It was a whole series of circumstances—your reasons change over time. I like being a vegetarian. When I was nine, I went to a Jewish school. We weren't kosher at home. My mom used to make chicken salad sandwiches. I would have to lie to everyone that it's tuna. I hated lying so much, that my mom had to make me kosher lunches. Now, it has become a really central thing in my life. Many religions associate food with belief because you eat three times a day. For me, the most important thing is preserving and respecting life in all its forms. So three times a day, I think about that.

You had no less than Luc Besson as director for your first film, "The Professional." You were only in your pre-teens. How do you remember that experience?

It was amazing. Mainly, I remember them keeping it fun and very childlike for me, always making it like a game and treating me like the little princess of the set. It was so nice and to have an experience like that, to have Luc Besson as your first director and Jean Reno and Gary Oldman as your first co-actors. It raises your standards.

What is you next film? And what do you do for fun?

I am starting a children's film in about a month called "Mr. Magorian's Wonder Emporium," with Dustin Hoffman, which I'm very excited about. I like a good laugh more than anything else. I'm figuring out what to do after that. As for my free time, I wish I had a little more (laughs). I love spending time with my friends. When I can't because I'm away, I read a lot and watch a lot of movies.

(E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.)

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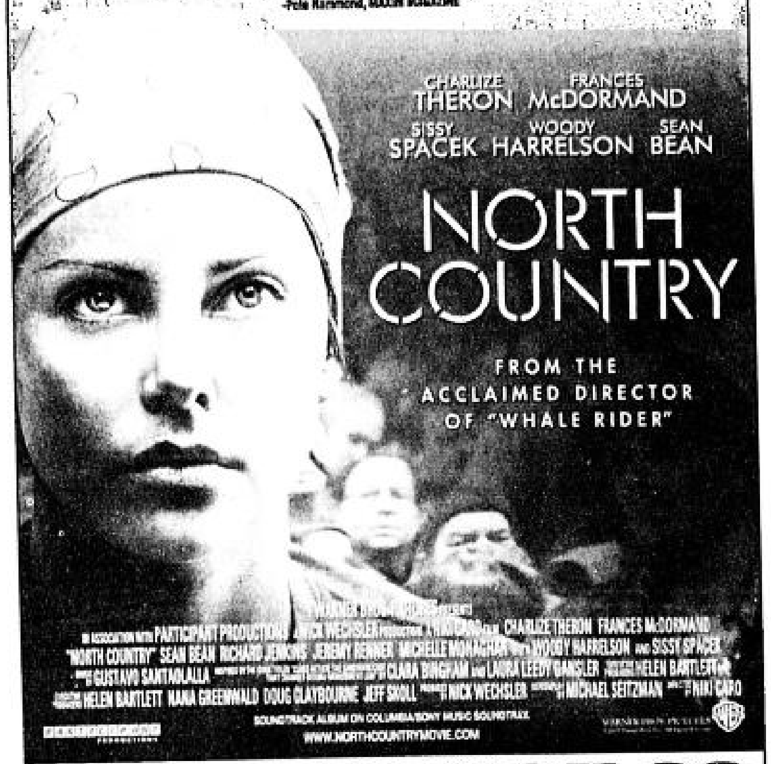
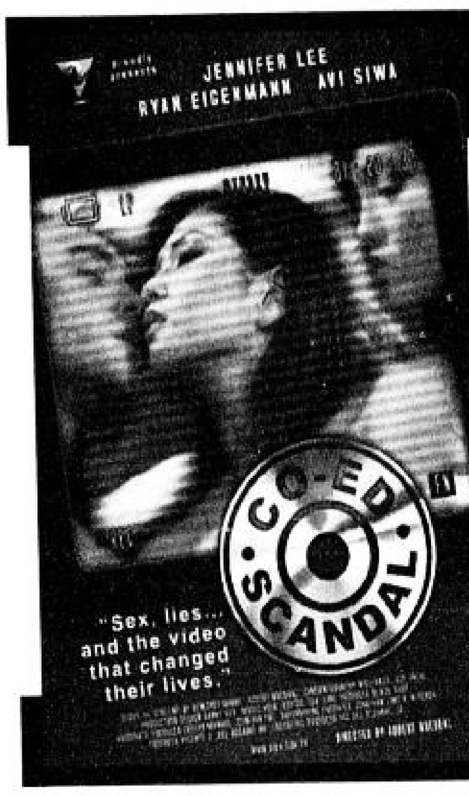


OPENS MARCH 22



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March 17, 2006 Friday

6:00 p.m
BITUING WALANG NINGNING
starring:
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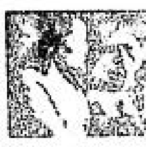

9:00 p.m
INSIANG
starring:
Hilda Koronel
NEXT ATTRACTION
March 18, 2006 Saturday
6:00 p.m
BADLIS SA KINABUHI
starring:
Gloria Sevilla
9:00 p.m
ORAPRONOBIS
starring:
Gina Alajar
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CHEUNG SUI FAI
Directed by JOHNNIE TO
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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HOUSE OF FURY	2 V FOR VENDETTA	3 HOSTEL	4 SHE'S THE MAN			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SHAGGY DOG	2 HOSTEL	3 THX V FOR VENDETTA 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 YOURS, MINE & OURS	5 16 BLOCKS	6 SHE'S THE MAN	7 DATE MOVIE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 16 BLOCKS	2 V FOR VENDETTA					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SHE'S THE MAN 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX V FOR VENDETTA 2:40, 5:30, 8:20, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 16 BLOCKS 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 DATE MOVIE 2:00, 3:4, 5:30, 7:15, 9:00, 10:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 HOSTEL 2:35, 4:45, 6:50, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX V FOR VENDETTA	2 SHE'S THE MAN	3 SHAGGY DOG	4 YOURS, MINE & OURS	5 HOSTEL		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 V FOR VENDETTA	2 HOSTEL	3 PRIDE & PREJUDICE	4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 V FOR VENDETTA	2 HOSTEL	3 HOUSE OF FURY	4 SHE'S THE MAN	5 SHAGGY DOG		

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Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
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cause he tries a hundred different options. Like he'll say, let's do it serious ... now, kind of funny ... you can do that only with a new director.

In your discussions with the directors and writers, did you connect the movie to what's going on in the world today?

There are resonances in the world today. This particular piece was written in 1984 about Thatcher's England but the fact that it can apply to so many different times and places shows the cyclical nature of these occurrences in history.

Your family in real life is also politically involved.

My grandfather was a Socialist Zionist, a left wing leader in Poland. So I definitely have this Socialist background, which I appreciate. I was brought up trying to see everyone on equal ground, to be concerned for other people and to desire to make the world a better place.

You recently traveled to Morocco. What inspired that trip?

I have been to Morocco twice now. I went once alone when I was in college. There's this book called "The Future Of Life" that's all about the environment and about how because human beings originated in Africa and Asia, the Middle East is the center of those two continents, that it's the environment that humans are most evolutionarily adapted to and feel most comfortable in. Whenever I'm in the desert atmosphere, I feel like I am in equilibrium with the environment. When I finished "V," I went for a few days as a birthday present for myself. There was this storm, so unusual in the desert. I ended up in a tent with six strangers, watching this amazing lightning. To actually have this silence in the desert was very helpful to me.

Going to "Goya's Ghost," how was your experience filming in Spain?

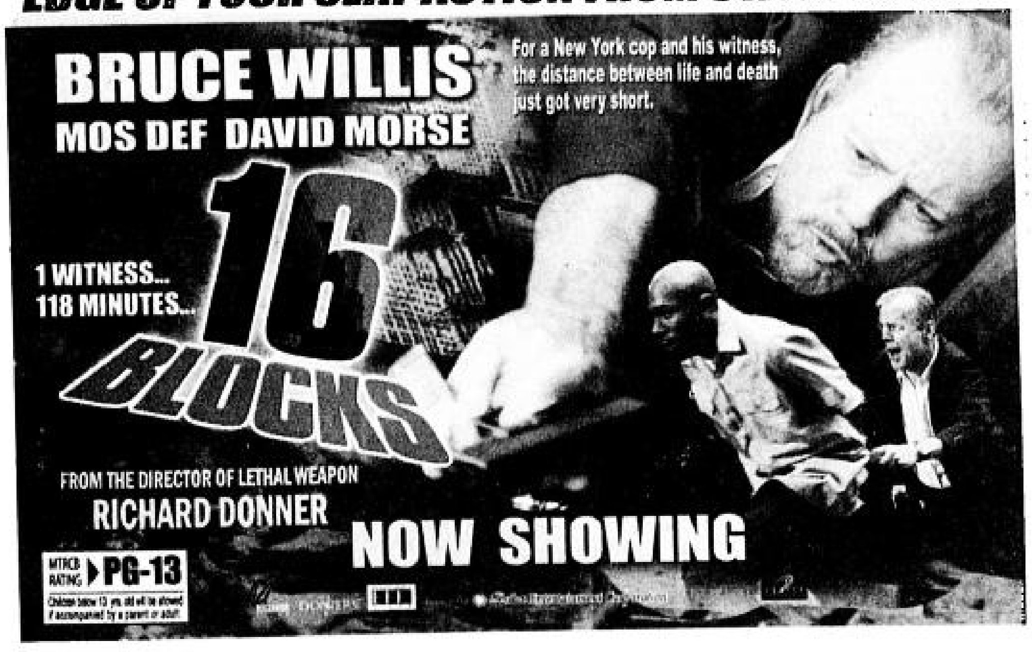
I loved the crew and I loved experiencing a different culture. I felt socially inept because ... they were working hard and then partying all night, then going back to work. Everyone was like, aren't you in your early 20s?

How have you stayed away from the public eye, unlike some of your peers?

I do have a lot of fun and I do go out ... with my friends who are not famous people. They're amazing people and are newsworthy in their respective fields but they are not tabloid fodder.

You are socially aware and yet you are always among the best

THE SHAVE. It was stressful, Natalie says, because the scene could be shot only once and they couldn't mess it up.



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HOUSE OF FURY 1:10 / 3:15 / 5:20 / 7:25 / 9:30	YOURS, MINE & OURS 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30	SHAGGY DOG 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	V FOR VENDETTA 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00
SHE'S THE MAN 1:20 / 4:00 / 6:40 / 9:20	CASANOVA 7:30 / 9:50	DATE MOVIE 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40 16 BLOCKS 1:55 / 4:30 / 7:05 / 9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249 P219

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1	V FOR VENDETTA 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00	2	HOSTEL 12:15 / 2:20 / 4:25 / 6:30 / 8:35		THE FEARLESS 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
4	HOUSE OF FURY 12:05 / 2:10 / 4:15 / 6:20 / 8:25	5	SHE'S THE MAN 12:35 / 3:15 / 5:55 / 8:35		DOLBY DIGITAL · dts · SDDS

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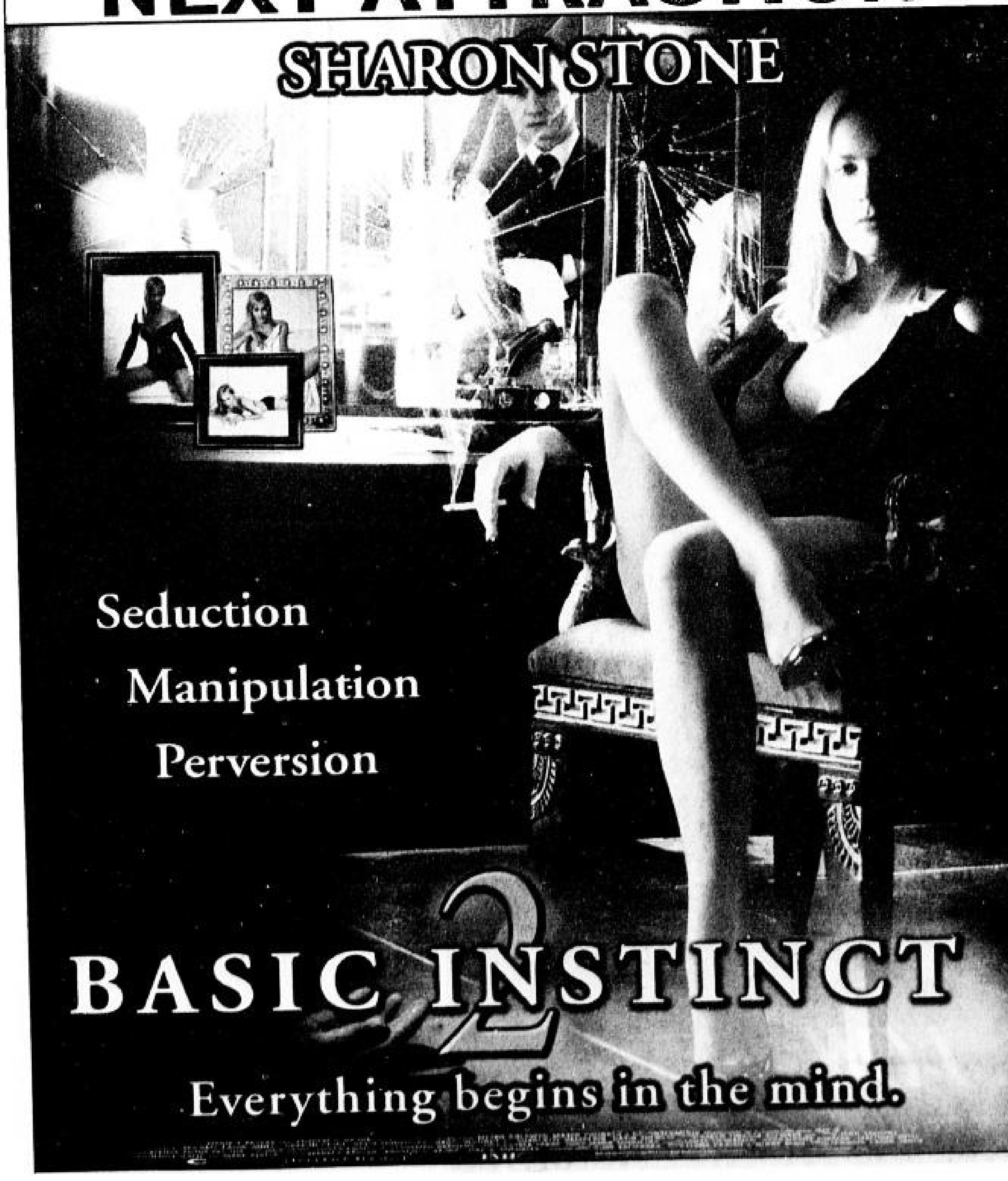

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2 (DOLBY) SHAGGY DOG GP
3 (DOLBY) HOSTEL R18
4 (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) 16 BLOCKS / CRASH PG13 / R13

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1 (DDS) HOUSE OF FURY
2 (SDDS) FINAL DESTINATION
3 (DTS) DATE MOVIE
4 GOLD (DTS) HOSTEL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN
6 GOLD (SDDS) SHAGGY DOG
7 GOLD (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
8 (DOLBY STEREO) FEARLESS
9 (DOLBY STEREO) CLOSE TO YOU
10 (DOLBY STEREO) 16 BLOCKS

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2 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
3 (DOLBY) SHE'S THE MAN
4 (DOLBY) HOSTEL

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 YOURS MINE & OURS
4 HOSTEL

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Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
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2 (DOLBY) HOSTEL
3 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
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1 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
4 FEARLESS
5 HOSTEL

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2 16 BLOCKS
3 (DOLBY) DATE MOVIE / SYRIANA
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(Gapan)
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5 HOUSE OF FURY

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2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN

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2 HOSTEL
3 (DTS EX) AEON FLUX
4 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN

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2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 BLOODRAYNE

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2 DISKARTE
Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SEX & ZEN
2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 DAYO
4 (DTS) VISIBLE SECRET-1
Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
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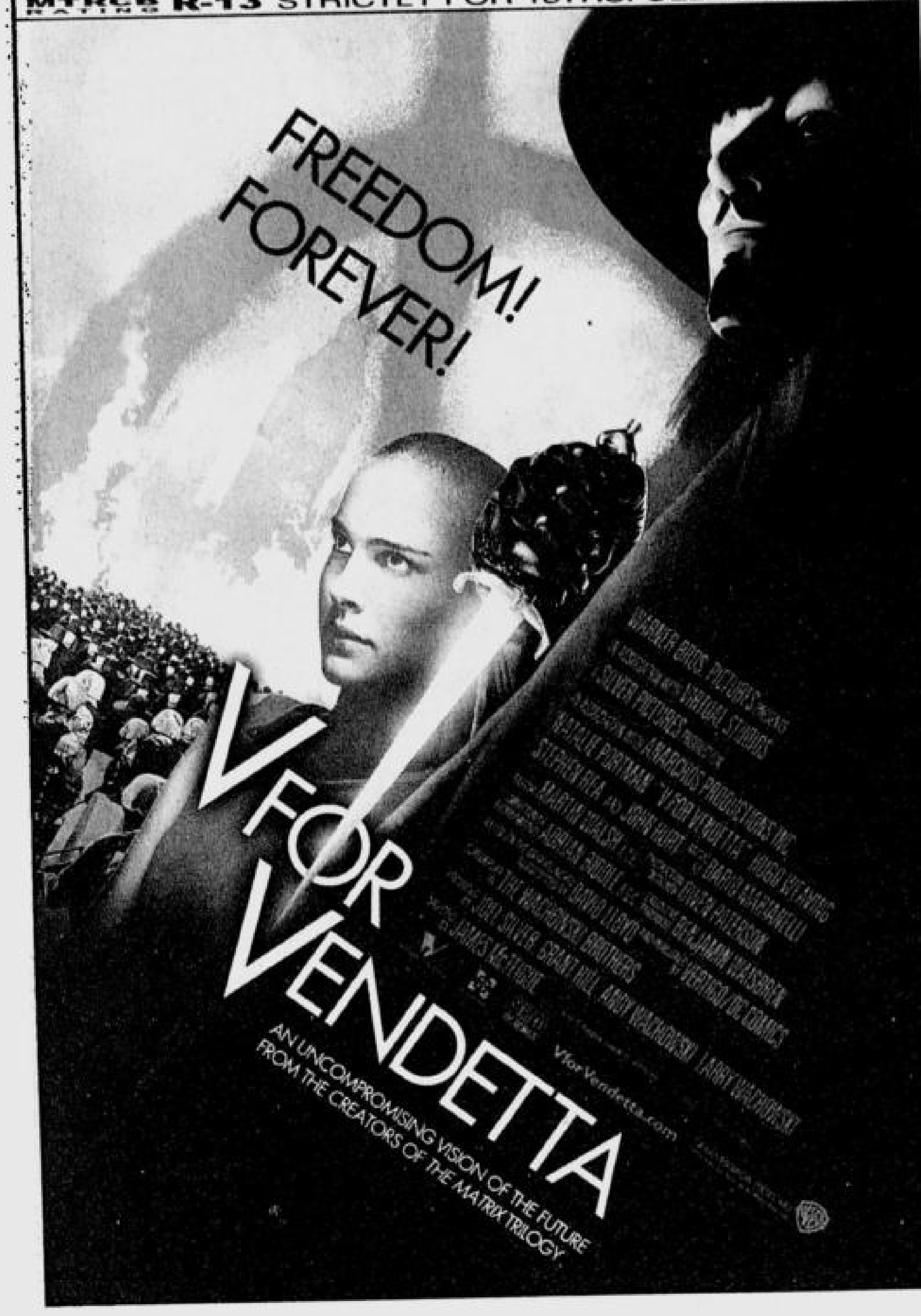
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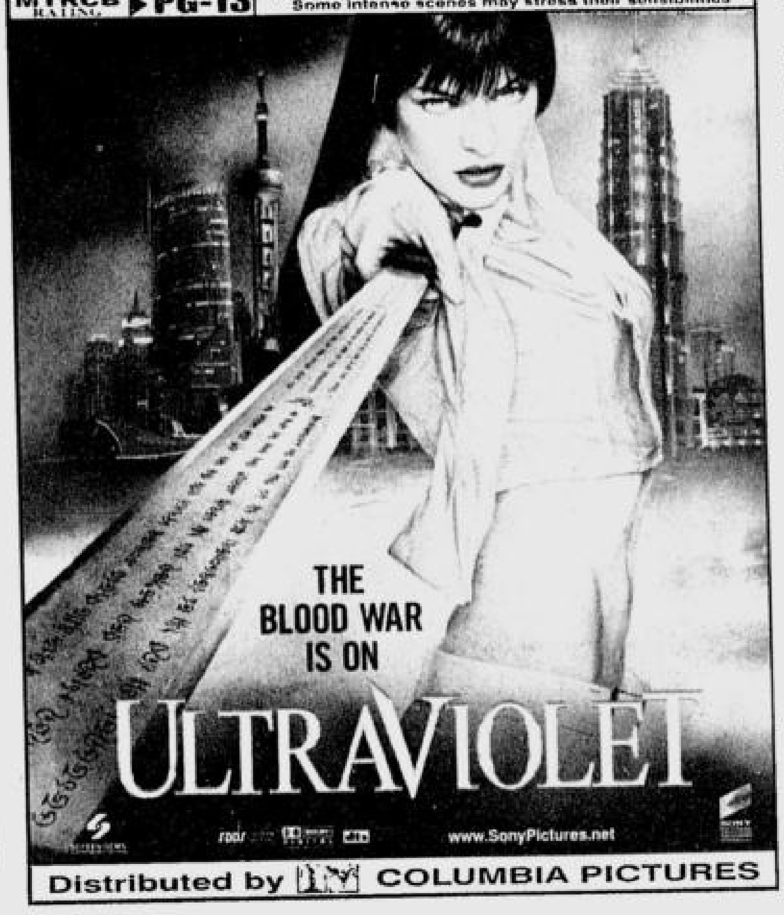
Barbie Almalbis (Mar. 25) Starmall Edsa

MUTANT ACTION BEGINS MARCH 22
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Parents cautioned against bringing kids age 9 & below. Some intense scenes may stress their sensibilities



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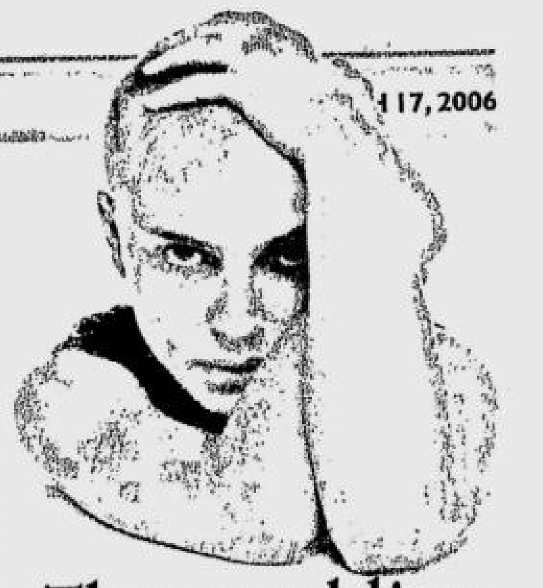

The sparkling Ms Portman

LOS ANGELES—THE MOVIE HAS A masked man in a black cape. Red roses. A beautiful lady held captive.

"Is this 'Phantom of the Opera, Part Two'?" I teased Natalie Portman.

"We were definitely always laughing, with the roses and the masks and all, but it's such a different movie," Natalie replied, laughing. "V for Vendetta" *is* different. This film adaptation of Alan Moore's graphic novel (illustrated mostly by David Lloyd), which has parallels to headline stories about terrorism and government oppression going on all over the world today, is getting important media coverage, including an advance review and story in Time magazine.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

The action-drama is Natalie's first major solo film. One drab winter afternoon in New York's Mandarin Oriental Hotel, the Jerusalem-born actress was dressed regally for the part. Wearing a striking white dress by Italian designer Giambattista Valli, she cut a striking figure despite her petite size (elfin is a word often used to describe her).

We've seen her on the red carpet but spending an hour with her in a press con, we realized she was even lovelier. The white dress set off her beautiful eyes—clearly her best asset. Her hair is starting to grow back after it was shaved off for a scene in "V for Vendetta."

This Harvard graduate, once voted "sexiest vegetarian" in an online poll by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), is a delight to talk to. James McTeigue, who was Natalie's assistant director in "Star Wars" prequels, and who now directs her in "V," told me, "You only need to be in the room with Natalie for about 30 seconds before you understand how bright she is."

Hugo Weaving, famous as Agent Smith in the "Matrix" movies, saw Natalie in a different perspective. In "V," he is a terrorist freedom fighter who begins a violent guerilla campaign to destroy a totalitarian government. Hugo said to me that with the mask, he really couldn't see Natalie's face, but saw something else. "I was often looking at her breasts," Hugo admitted with a smile.

The "Matrix" connection does not stop with Hugo. Read on for Natalie's insight into the media-elusive Wachowski brothers, who wrote and directed the "Matrix" movies, and who are the writers and co-producers of "V."

Didn't you dread the scene where your head was shaved? Would you do it again?

I was actually excited; I thought it would be fun and liberating. I don't know if I'd do it again—but only because it takes a really long time to grow back. The most stressful thing was ... that was a one-shot scene so you want to make sure that the cameras don't mess up, that the razor doesn't mess up, and I don't start laughing."

What was the biggest adjustment you had to make as a woman with a shaved head?

It was probably that I became pretty anonymous, like I could walk down the streets in New York and no one stopped me. But when your head is shaved, you get stared at a lot. I also had a cold issue. I remember being in Berlin in that winter with no hair.

Did you feel an urge to try on Hugo's mask?

No (laughs). Hugo said it was so hot! [But] even for his off-camera lines, he would keep it on, just to help me react.

Do you wear metaphorical masks?

I think I'm a pretty open person. But I have to sort of be careful because you don't want complete strangers knowing intimate details of your life (laughs).

The Wachowski brothers rarely give interviews. You had the rare privilege of knowing them during the filming. What are they like?

They're amazing people, really down to earth. If someone comes up and and asks them, no, not if they're the Wachowski Brothers but say, what is this movie about, they'll end up talking to that stranger for half an hour. They're extremely approachable, nice guys who are incredibly smart. They're sort of egoless [but] beyond interesting. They were on the set every day.

What are your thoughts on "V" creator Alan Moore going public, saying that he does not want to be associated with the movie version?

Those who made the movie really respect and admire Allan's work. He's had bad experiences in the past so I think it comes from that.

You just finished making "Goya's Ghost" with director Milos Forman. Can you compare working with an award-winning veteran like Milos and a first-time director like James McTeigue?

The big difference is that Milos knows exactly what he's going to cut. He never shoots more than what's necessary. James wants to try a lot of different things. That's exciting to me as an actor be-

THE SPARKLING/ A2-5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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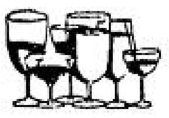
WHAT'S INSIDE



Equitable fever /B3

BSP tightens rules on dealings with banks, PDIC /B5

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS bago ang April 17 deadline.
31 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

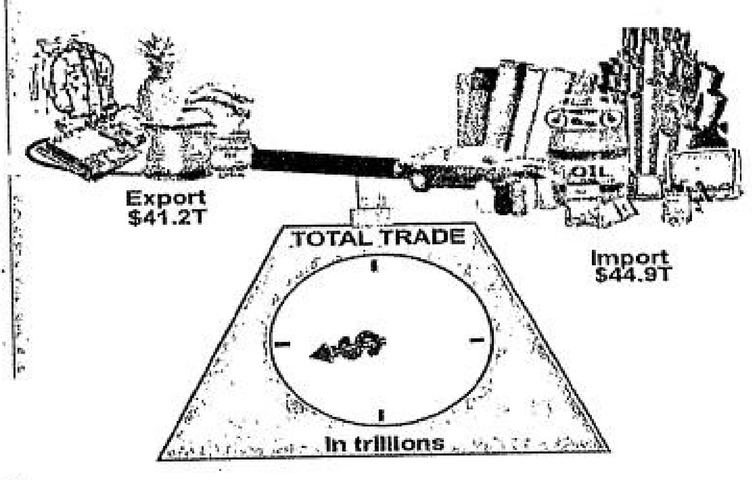
BOP surplus triples to $2.03B

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Balance of trade

THE COUNTRY'S trade deficit in 2005 stood at $ 3.67 trillion, a 16 percent decline compared to the previous year's $ 4.36 trillion.



Source: National Statistics Office
Chona B. Galang, PDI Research

Investments, remittances seen to push up windfall

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES POSTED A BALANCE OF PAYments surplus of $2.03 billion from January to February, about three times greater than the $685 million registered in the same period last year.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on Thursday reported that the strong BOP surplus position, brought on by inflows from foreign borrowings, foreign invest-

BOP/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.14 = $ 1

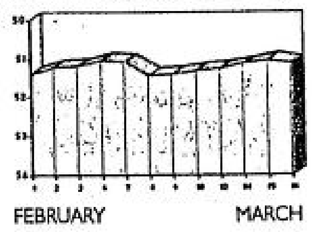
As of 5 p.m., March 16, 2006

¥ 117.67 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 16, 2006

GOLD: $551.10-551.60

per ounce Hong Kong, March 16, 2006



Shares up 0.65%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.65 percent higher after Wall Street marked further gains and local banks were allowed to continue to sell idle assets, dealers said.

They said Congress has ratified the two-year extension of a law that allows

SHARES/ B4

Peso closes at 51.14 after hitting 51:$1 in intra-day trade

THE PESO YESTERDAY TESTED the crucial 51:$1 barrier, but was pulled back to 51.14 against the US dollar due to increasing local demand for the greenback, as well as the weakening of the Japanese yen.

Ending five straight days of strengthening, the local currency closed near the intra-day low of 51.15, and far from the intra-day high of 51:$1.

At its closing rate of 51.14, the peso thus shed 9 centavos from Wednesday's finish of 51.05 to the dollar.

PESO/ B2

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CAP clients urge SC to junk RTC order

Motion filed to reverse decision allowing CAP to stop payment of policies

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HUNDREDS OF PRE-NEED PLAN HOLDERS have asked the Supreme Court to junk a Makati court's decision allowing College Assurance Plan Philippines (CAP) to temporarily stop payment of its obligations to clients.

Syquia Pascual-Lopez & Santos, the legal counsel representing 336 CAP plan holders, yesterday filed the petition for certiorari and prohibition against Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Romeo Barza.

In their petition, the plan holders asked the court to annul a stay order issued by Barza, which suspended last Sept. 13 CAP's payment of its obligations.

Also, they asked the high court to cancel an order issued on Dec. 16, 2005, granting CAP's petition to undergo corporate rehabilitation.

Plan holders said that rehabilitation proceedings should not be used to cover up and perpetuate alleged fraud.

When the Makati court last year granted CAP's petition for rehabilitation, it also directed the pre-need firm's receiver to evaluate the rehabilitation scheme.

CAP's receiver, Mamerto Marcelo Jr., is also included in the plan holders' petition. They asked the high court to nullify Marcelo's appointment as receiver and to declare CAP in contempt for forum shopping.

CAP legal counsel Gilbert Reyes told the INQUIRER that officials of the pre-need firm have not been served a copy of the petition.

The law firm Syquia Pascual-Lopez & Santos argued that Barza's orders granting CAP's petition for rehabilitation and suspending payments were issued "without, or in excess of, jurisdiction and with grave abuse of discretion."

They said the relationship between a plan holder and a pre-need corporation is one of trust and not a debtor-creditor relationship. Hence, a pre-need firm may not avail of rehabilitation proceedings to stop payments to plan holders.

The lawyers also said that rehabilitaion proceedings, as in the case of CAP, may not be utilized to cover up fraud.

But according to Reyes, CAP's counsel, the Makati court judge acted with prudence.

"I do not see where the Barza court went wrong in this," Reyes said. "[The plan holders' decision to file the petition] is a total waste of precious judicial time and resources, at a time when we should be concentrating on how best to protect the greater interest of all plan holders by devising a realistic ... rehabilitation [plan] for CAP. This is what the Barza court directed the interim receiver to determine, is such a rehab plan possible? That study is still ongoing."

Also, the lawyer said he could not see the legal basis behind the plan holders' petition.

"The court has not even acted on the rehab plan," Reyes said. "Whether CAP goes on rehab or is ordered to be liquidated, the first step is to issue a stay order to put some order into the process, and avoid a mad scramble for assets by claimants."

CAP has about 780,000 plan holders. Its license to sell securities was suspended in 2004.

Sycip: US dev't ideas do not ensure success

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER WESTERN countries should not impose their ideas on less developed economies as there are different paths to industrialization and development for different countries, a gathering of American business groups in the region was told.

Washington SyCip, founder of audit and management consultancy firm SGV Group, said the very success of the US and other Western countries might cause them to believe that their own formulas for success should be blindly followed by all the others.

SyCip was speaking at the annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Council of American Chamber of Commerce that would end today at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

"My suggestion is to let nations at different stages of economic development to decide what to adopt and when to adopt," he said.

"What the (richer nations should do is to help the poorer ones) on education as this is the best way to reduce poverty," he added." The rest will follow naturally."

SyCip was referring to the insistence of industrialized nations for developing economies to implement Western-style democracy and institutions, including unhampered mass media.

A member of the Harvard University Asia Center's advisory committee, SyCip said that the ideal and proven model for rapid economic development in East Asia was "strong and maybe authoritarian political leadership, hopefully not too corrupt."

However, he said there must be economic freedom so that the citizens would be motivated to create wealth and that opportunities for corruption by politicians would be reduced.

He countered Western experts "who wrongly assume" that economic freedom was not normal under authoritarian governments, saying this was actually the successful models of the widely praised Tigers of Asia—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong.

"Taiwan was under martial law and South Korea was under a military dictatorship when their per capita incomes were at present levels of China," SyCip said. "Democracy came naturally only after income levels rose and their people were educated and well fed."

Also chair of the Asian Institute of Management's board of trustees and of governors, SyCip said data from the United Nations and the World Bank indicated that Western-style democracy was sustainable only if annual per capita income levels were above $3,000 or even $4,000.

"(These amounts) are much more than the income levels of South Asia or countries like the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos," SyCip said.

As for freedom of the mass media, SyCip countered the assumption that this is a must for nations to develop.

Peso closes ...

From page B1

Currency traders said the peso succumbed to profit-taking as the yen fell in Asian trade after the Bank of Japan hinted that short-term interest rates in the country would remain near zero for the time being.

The indication that the interest rates would be kept low dragged down the Japanese yen against the US dollar to 117.89 yen from around 117.50 yen.

At the Philippine Dealing System, dealers said the dollar was oversold against the peso, providing buying opportunity for those who want to beef up their holdings of the greenback.

"There was short covering for dollars," the traders said. "This could continue especially ahead of a weekend."

Another trader said that the low exchange rate also "attracted corporate demand."

The volume of transactions yesterday eased to $461.5 million from $663.57 million Wednesday.

Traders expect the peso to trade within a range of 51.05-51.25 against the US dollar today.

At press time, the financial market is also awaiting the release of the Philippine government's February budget deficit data.

Doris C. Dumlao

BOP surplus ...

From page B1

ments and overseas Filipino workers remittances, was in line with the surge in the country's foreign exchange reserves to a new record high of $20.58 billion as of end-February.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the significant improvement in the country's external liquidity would allow the prepayment this April of $500 million in debts ahead of the original maturity in October.

For the month of February, the BOP surplus amounted to $104 million, smaller than the $962 million surplus posted in the same month last year.

The BOP figure in February was also smaller than the $1.92 billion surplus posted in January, when the government raised $1.5 billion from offshore bond offerings.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident, like importation, is a deficit item in the BOP. On the other hand, any transaction which gives rise to a receipt, like borrowing, exporting or inward remittance, is a surplus item.

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Equitable fever

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

SSS CHAIR THELMO CUNANAN yesterday said the P95 per Equitable PCIBank share proposal from GSIS "look(ed) very inviting" but that he and the SSS board were waiting for a formal communication from the Government Service Insurance System.

The P95 figure is being quoted by GSIS president Winston Garcia, saying he has an unnamed buyer who wants to acquire the SSS, Sy and GSIS blocks for undisputed majority control of Equitable PCIBank.

Garcia met Wednesday with Equitable PCIBank vice chair Teresita Sy, promising to submit a formal offer to Sy before the March 29 bank board meeting if she would conditionally agree to accept the P95 offer, along with the Social Security System.

Yesterday, Garcia spent his day convincing key SSS board members on his proposal, preparatory to his submitting a written offer in time for the SSS board meeting on Wednesday.

Equitable PCIBank chair Corazon de la Paz, who is also SSS vice chair and president, was out of the country again, but has promised to be back in time for the SSS and Equitable PCIBank board meetings.

Market speculation that the family of taipan Henry Sy Sr. was even willing to consider the Garcia proposal helped boost Equitable PCIBank share prices, which closed yesterday at P73, from only P64.50 last week.

Incidentally, the combined stakes of SSS, GSIS and Sy-Banco de Oro represent about 74.4 percent of Equitable PCIBank, which, at P95 per share, amounts to over P51 billion.

Now, who among the local players would have that kind of ready cash?

Zobel premium

Bank of the Philippine Islands saved more than P34 million in executive compensation last year after the bank dropped its chair, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, from the executive payroll.

According to the just-released BPI annual report, the 2004 compensation of the chair, president and CEO, and three other top officers amounted to P96.695 million.

The figure did not include the P10.505 million bonus handed out to the group.

The following year, despite the addition of one executive vice president, Adelbert Legasto, and one senior vice president, Senen Mato-to, the top executive compensation even dropped to P62.39 million.

The group bonus, however, increased to P18.08 million, on the strength of the bank's net income improving to P8.554 billion, from 2004's P6.887 billion.

In addition to Jaza having been dropped from the executive payroll, the year 2005 also marked the retirement of long-time president Xavier Loinaz and his replacement by Aurelio Montinola III.

As chair and board director, Jaza now has been reduced to receiving P1 million a year, just like what the other 14 BPI directors receive.

Heard through the grapevine

A POST OFFICE box shareholder of Bacnotan Consolidated has just sold its 7.93-percent stake in the holding company for about P117 million.

Bacnotan president Ramon del Rosario Jr. swears he does not know the beneficial owner of the seller, Supralex Holdings and Ventures Corp., except that its corporate nominee/front act is listed as a "Barbara Anne Migallos."

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Nokia moves to win provincial markets

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOCAL UNIT OF NOKIA, THE world's largest mobile phone maker, further increased its share of the highly competitive Philippine market last year, its country head said.

In a presentation to the media on Wednesday, Nokia Philippines country general manager Parikshit Bhasin said the company's "penetration rate" here stood at 41 percent as of end 2005.

He said this was an improvement from the previous year's penetration rate. However, he did not reveal exact figures.

Despite Nokia's dominant market share, Bhasin said the company would continue to aggressively market its products in the country, moving its focus now to smaller cities in the provinces as the Metro Manila market for mobile phones becomes saturated.

"There is still enough room for growth in the number of [mobile phone service] subscribers [using Nokia units]," he told reporters.

As of end 2005, Bhasin said close to 35 million mobile phone users are now using Nokia units. This is higher than the estimated 33 million Nokia phone users reported as of end 2004.

For 2006, Bhasin said Nokia will shift its marketing efforts particularly to what he described as "tier 2 and 3 cities."

For the higher-end mobile phone users, Nokia will depend on the recently introduced third-generation (3G) technology of mobile communications.

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Bond Fund - Peso	1.40476	1.39694
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Growth Fund - Peso	1.15094	1.14925
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.2389	1.2359

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

Investment Funds of Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure	UNIT PRICES (in Php) March 13, 2006	March 6, 2006
Fixed Income Fund	1.134202	1.131095
Balanced Fund	1.118447	1.121339
Equity Fund	1.083727	1.100578

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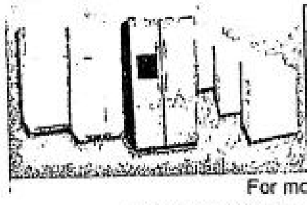

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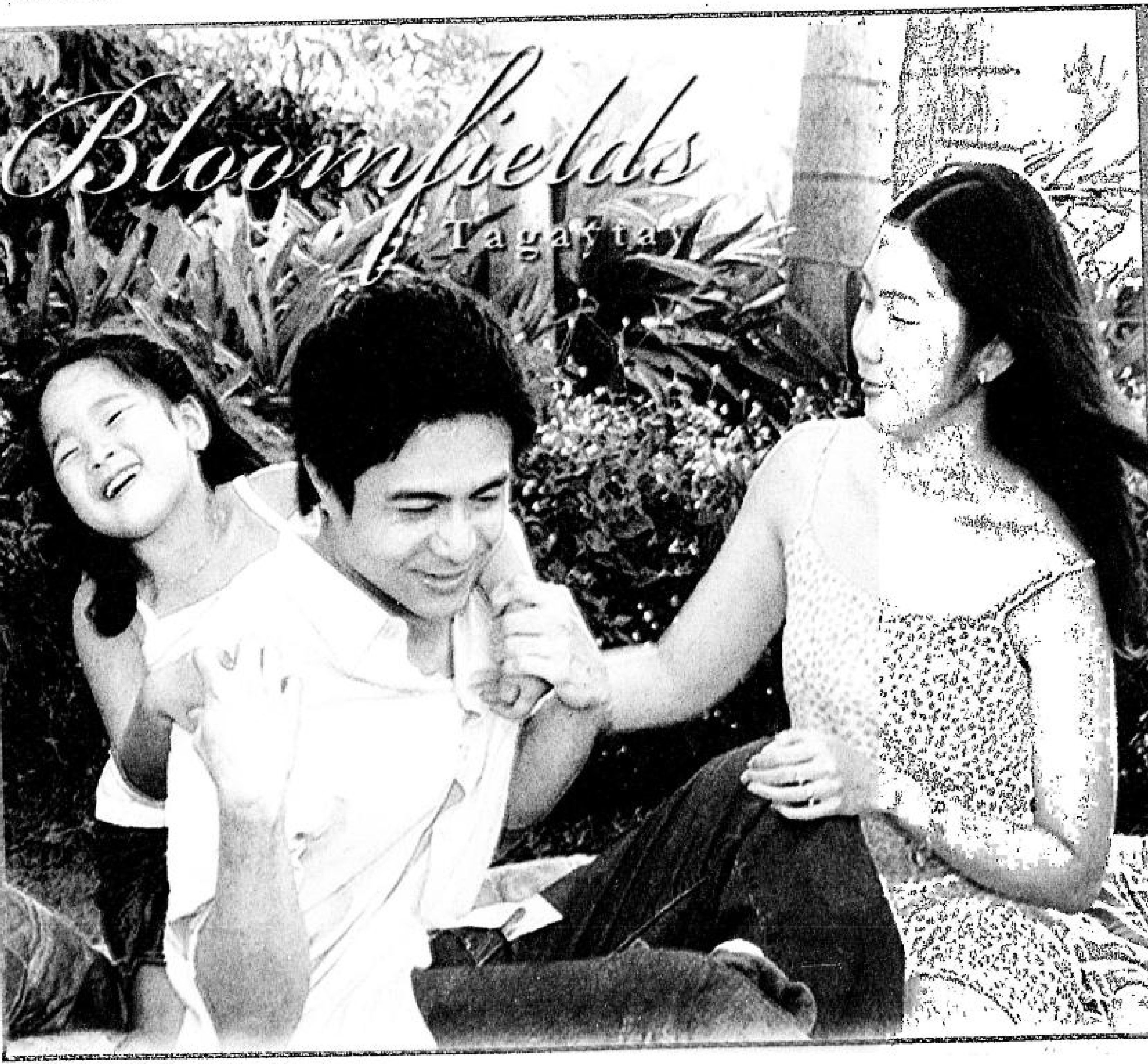

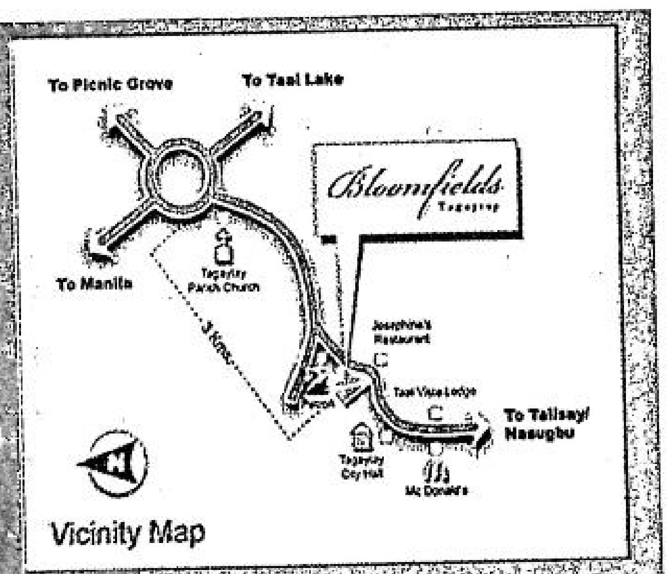

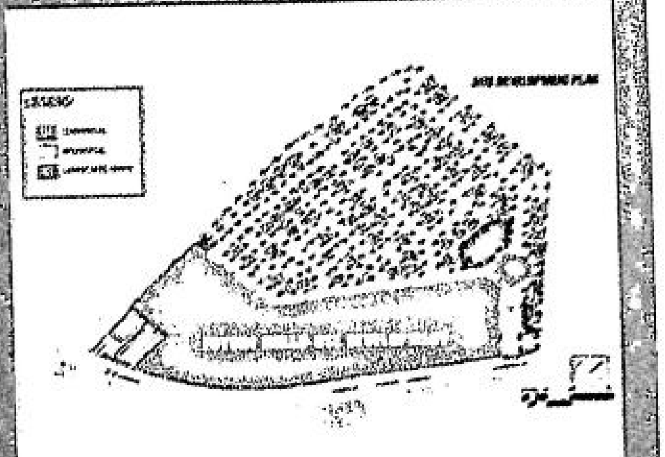

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ROBINSONS HOMES, INC.

Panlilio group to put up hotel

Boulevard Holdings to spend P91M for Puerto Galera project

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BOULEVARD HOLDings Inc. of the Panlilio family is spending roughly P91 million for a new high-end boutique hotel in Bouquete Beach, Puerto Galera, in Mindoro.

Jose Marcel Panlilio, chair at Boulevard Holdings told reporters after a briefing late Wednesday that groundbreaking for the 25-room hotel was scheduled for 2007.

The hotel, to be dubbed "Fridays Puerto Galera," will be its second resort hotel.

It will sit on a four-hectare property within a well known dive, beach and lagoon destination in Mindoro.

"The most important factor here is BHI's ability to take advantage of the most extensive land bank of beach destinations already bought 30 years or so ago by the family," Panlilio said.

Fridays' Holdings is the owner and operator of Fridays Resort in Boracay.

The hotel has recently expanded to 47 luxurious rooms, from 41 rooms.

Last year, occupancy rate at the Boracay hotel was at 95 percent versus the island's 65 percent.

In the next five years, Boulevard Holdings will expand Fridays Resort to 61 rooms.

Boulevard Holdings owns 77 percent of Fridays' Holdings and plans to buy out the rest of the shareholders this year.

Revenues from Fridays Resort is expected to grow to P145 million this year from P124 million last year or up 16.9 percent.

Boulevard Holdings is owned by the Panlilio Group of Companies, which operates one of the biggest local chains of hotels and resorts.

Shares up 0.65%

From page B1

banks to sell their non-performing assets free from some taxes. The Special Purpose Vehicle Law is set to be signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Estimates show between P100 billion to P150 billion worth of soured loans and foreclosed assets out of about P420 billion may be sold under special purpose vehicles. The composite index added 13.86 points to 2,141.77. It traded between 2,127.91 and 2,147.27. The broader all-shares index advanced 4.40 points to 1,040.07.

Volume reached 568.5 million shares worth P1.7 billion. Gainers outnumbered losers 50 to 35, while 49 stocks ended unchanged.

The peso averaged at 51.07 to the US dollar in midday trade. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 16, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	35	35	374,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	60	61.5	60	61	1,650,900
China Banking Corp.	675	680	675	680	120
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.39	0.39	6,710,000
Equitable PCI Bankinc.	69	73.5	69	73	500,900
International Exch. Bank	26	26	25.5	25.5	5,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37.5	38	36.5	36.5	339,700
Philippine National Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	45,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	52,000
Security Bank Corp.	38	38	37.5	37.5	72,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	18,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3240	3240	3240	3240	340
Sun Life Financialinc.	2180	2185	2180	2185	260
Ivantage Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	2,490,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	42	42	41	42	14,870,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	40	41	39.5	41	329,900
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	12.75	12.75	41,200
Manila Electric Co. B	19.75	20	19.75	20	755,800
Manila Water Co.Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	1,564,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.5	4.55	8,037,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	250,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	30,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	6,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	18	18.25	18	18.25	20,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36.5	39	36.5	38.5	987,800
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.75	3.65	3.75	20,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.74	1.76	764,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61	61	60	61	81,800
San Miguel Corp. B	78	78	77.5	78	571,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	5,000
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	901,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE& ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.29	2,960,000
Engineering Equip.Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.28	1.32	9,521,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.72	0.77	0.72	0.77	120,000
Holcim Philippinesinc.	4.45	4.5	4.35	4.4	2,474,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	4,600,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.32	430,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	342.5	345	342.5	342.5	190,390
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	5	5	561,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	18,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.44	2.44	2.42	2.42	177,000
APC Groupinc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	550,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	600,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indusinc.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	3,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93	2,670,000
DMCI Holdingsinc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	649,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.32	2.38	2.3	2.38	2,684,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	150,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.95	5.1	4.9	5.1	374,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	500,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.245	3,450,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	12,000
Solid Groupinc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	60,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	1,830,000
SM Investments Corp.	224	226	223	223	556,900
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.13	550,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Landinc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.5	3,013,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Belle Corp.	1	1.02	1	1	2,520,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	20,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,700,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	4,639,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	23,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	50,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.215	3,400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	30,950,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.67	0.7	1,650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.24	12,052,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.9	3.05	2.9	3.05	285,000
Interport Res. B	0.0042	0.0044	0.0042	0.0044	9,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	900,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	12,772,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	6,190,000
MRC Allied Ind.Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.25	0.25	4,260,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	3,004,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	3,680,000
SM Development Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	33,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	8.1	7.9	8	15,225,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,500,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	4,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	9,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89	510,000
Globe Telecominc.	850	875	850	865	25,310
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	1,879,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1825	1830	1825	1830	82,430
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.205	0.205	15,480,000
Ionics Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	237,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.048	0.05	8,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.16	231,000
Philweb Corp.	0.024	0.024	0.022	0.023	130,900,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.9	50,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	125,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.5	1,724,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	200,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.38	1.28	1.38	22,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.82	1.82	2,819,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	80,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	600,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	159,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	266,000
Paxysinc.	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.4	746,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	240,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	80,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	31,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.9	7	6.8	6.8	562,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	2,780,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	1,740,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	59,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	9,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	6,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.94	2.04	1.94	2.02	20,383,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.08	2.2	2.08	2.2	25,048,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	65,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.29	0.33	0.28	0.33	10,770,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	150,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	15,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.95	4	3.95	4	10,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	11	11	11	11	16,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	35,300

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Financial	12,259,920	173,868,450.00
Industrial	49,743,600	829,150,235.00
Holding Firms	48,777,290	208,714,860.00
Property	117,366,000	241,255,250.00
Service	164,429,240	184,300,465.00
Mining & Oil	183,918,000	107,030,650.00
GRAND TOTALS:	576,494,050	1,744,319,910.00

	AVERAGES	
Financial	678.78	UP 10.47
Industrial	3,054.84	UP 18.60
Holding Firms	1,040.93	DOWN 0.75
Property	878.43	UP 2.72
Service	1,040.07	UP 4.40
Mining & Oil	3,041.52	UP 68.86
All Shares Index	1,311.20	UP 6.42
Composite	2,141.77	UP 13.86

NO. OF ADVANCES: 50; NO. OF DECLINES: 35; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 49; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 134; NO. OF TRADES: 4,342

CURRENCIES

March 16, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.828432	1.000000	51.0470
Japan	Yen	0.007061	0.008523	0.4351
United Kingdom	Pound	1.447767	1.747600	89.2097
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106780	0.128894	6.5797
Switzerland	Franc	0.639568	0.772022	39.4094
Canada	Dollar	0.717506	0.866101	44.2119
Singapore	Dollar	0.511978	0.618009	31.5475
Australia	Dollar	0.611298	0.737898	37.6675
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.198248	2.653505	135.4535
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220915	0.266667	13.6126
Brunei	Dollar	0.510401	0.616105	31.4503
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000110	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021166	0.025549	1.3042
UAE	Dirham	0.225577	0.272294	13.8998
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.207100	61.6188
Argentina	Peso	0.269848	0.325733	16.6277
Brazil	Real	0.390438	0.471298	24.0583
Denmark	Kroner	0.134053	0.161815	8.2602
India	Rupee	0.018752	0.022635	1.1554
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223658	0.269978	13.7816
Mexico	New Peso	0.077845	0.093967	4.7967
New Zealand	Dollar	0.533852	0.644413	32.8954
Norway	Kroner	0.125372	0.151336	7.7252
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013782	0.016636	0.8492
South Africa	Rand	0.134311	0.162127	8.2761
Korea	Won	0.000850	0.001026	0.0524
Sweden	Kroner	0.106690	0.128785	6.5741
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025608	0.030911	1.5779

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Challenge #3: Mastering the Keys to Achieving Your Goals. Top PLDT and Smart executive and movie producer **Butch Jimenez*** shares how he sets and achieves his goals with his team.

Challenge #4: Leading Through Adversity with Integrity. **Sandy Prieto,** CEO of The Philippine Daily Inquirer, shares the challenges of being 'bullied' by political powers that threatened to close their business and shares how to get through challenges.

Challenge #5: Discovering the Servant Leader Within. Be inspired with one of UK's youngest millionaire entrepreneurs and now Gawad Kalinga's benefactor, **Dylan Wilk,** as he shows the strengths he sees in Filipinos and how they can be maximized to turn around the lives of Filipinos and of the country.

Challenge #6. Attitude Adjustments-Going from *'Pwede Na!'* to Excellence. **Rex Resureccion,** best-selling author of "Called to Excel" will challenge participants to rise from the mediocre, *pwede-na* attitude to an attitude of excellence.

Challenge #7. Life Balance. As a closing session, **Francis Kong** concludes the seminar by imparting success keys to meet the challenge of multi-tasking, leading our families harmoniously, and making sure we don't miss out on the most important things in life - our relationships.

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Seminar fee is just PhP500.00. Inclusive of: Buffet lunch, morning & afternoon snacks, and a 6-month subscription to PC Magazine.

Selected participants shall be contacted prior to the event and shall be given instructions on how to forward payments. Once payment is received, the selected participants shall be given CONFIRMATION CODES. Only interested parties with confirmation codes shall be accepted into the seminars.

Due to limited slots, PC Magazine reserves the right to pre-select the participants for the above seminars.

BSP tightens rules on dealings with banks, PDIC

Ensuring policies are consistent with mandate

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS tightened the rules on its dealings, as a lender of last resort, with banks and Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

In a statement, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the policy-making Monetary Board had approved stiffer regulations on the BSP's rediscounting, emergency lending, overnight clearing line and lending to the PDIC.

"This is to ensure that the BSP's credit policies are consistent with its primary mandate, as a central monetary authority, to promote domestic price stability and support the stability of the financial system," Tetangco said.

The measures approved for the overnight clearing line and emergency loan facilities included the restoration of the regular evaluation process required to convert a temporary overdraft into an emergency loan; stricter definition of the preconditions, requirements and limits for the granting of emergency loans, and simplified collateral guidelines and rationalization of certain rules and procedures for greater transparency and efficiency.

For the rediscounting facility, the BSP tightened the requirements on documentation, standards for acceptability and valuation of collateral, and the eligibility criteria to focus on the borrowing bank's state of health.

Under the loan window for the PDIC, the BSP imposed preconditions for the granting of loans, particularly on the existence of systemic risk and consistency with monetary policy, more realistic loan limits and prescription of interest rates to cover at least the average cost of funds to the BSP.

The terms on the collateral, maturity and repayment period were likewise aligned with international best practices.

In a separate statement, PDIC president Ricardo Tan said PDIC was capable of paying its obligations to the BSP and that all financial assistance to distressed banks were granted after a prudent and judicious process coordinated with the BSP.

As of December 2005, PDIC reported total outstanding loans payable to BSP amounting to P73.1 billion. Tan said 60 percent or P43.9 billion had defined repayment sources while 40 percent was covered by promissory notes maturing within six to 43 years.

Thrift banks map out fund-raising strategies, plans

PHILIPPINE THRIFT BANKS ARE WORKING together in undertaking efforts to raise capital, such as tier 2 debt offering, private placement from new investors or merger with other banks.

In a press briefing, top officials of the Chamber of Thrift Banks said the association would map out during its annual convention in Baguio City today strategic courses of action to cope with stiffer capital adequacy requirements imposed by the International Accounting Standards and Basel 2.

"Owners of the banks will have to bring in more funds or get new investors," said Alfonso Salcedo, president of the country's biggest thrift bank BPI Family Bank and incoming president of CTB.

CTB, which groups the majority of the country's 84 thrift banks, plans to negotiate with investment banks for lower capital-raising fees.

"We also intend to help our smaller members who may find the costs of raising capital too high," said CTB executive director Suzanne Felix.

While thrift banks are now allowed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to raise funds through tier 2 or subordinated debt offering, only a few, had so far tapped this option. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Bingo operator eyes new investor

LEISURE AND RESORTS WORLD CORP. YESterday said it was negotiating with a foreign investments holding company with assets in Asia for the sale of a 3.6-percent percent stake in the bingo operating company.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, LRWC said the prospective investor was involved in portfolio investment of strategic assets in Asia, with a particular focus on China, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The investor is interested to buy 28.5 million shares of LRWC at between P1.74 and P1.84 a share. LRWC closed at P1.82 per share yesterday.

The shares under negotiation will come from the unissued portion of the authorized capital stock of LRWC.

LRWC and the prospective investor are in their final stages of negotiations. A deal is expected to be closed by the end of the month.

The final terms and conditions of the investment as well as any definitive agreement between LRWC and the prospective investors would be subject to the approval of their respective board of directors.

LRWC owns 100 percent of AB Leisure Exponent Inc. (popularly known as Bingo Bonanza), the operator of bingo parlors nationwide. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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PEZA grants Pioneer Status to HKT Philippines, Inc. (HKTPI). On February 22, 2006, the Phil. Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) signed a Supplemental Agreement with HKTPI granting Pioneer Status to HKTPI. From L-R, Atty. Pio Lorenzo F. Batino, Legal Counsel (HKTPI), Mr. Masao Yamazaki, President (HKTPI), Hon. Lilia B. de Lima, Director General (PEZA) and Mr. Anthony D. Torres, Vice President (HKTPI).

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   - Experience related to franchise development is an advantage
   - Honest, reliable with good organizational skills
   - Computer literate
   - Excellent communication, presentation skills
2. **ASST. CHEF (1)**
   - M/F 23-32 years old
   - At least 1-2 years extensive experience gained from restaurant, commissary or industrial canteen operation
   - Knowledge in menu development, food costing, cost control, inventory management and kitchen management.
   - Computer literate
   - Has good decision making, resourceful, with a sense of urgency and trustworthy
3. **QA/RD ASSISTANT (1)**
   - M/F at least 23 years old
   - Food technology graduate, Nutrition or Food engineering course
   - At least 1 year experience in the food manufacturing industry
   - Familiar with regulatory requirements
   - Preferably with knowledge of food costing, cost control, inventory control and kitchen management
   - Has good decision making, resourceful, with a sense of urgency and trustworthy
4. **MALL LEASING OFFICER (1)**
   - F/M
   - 22-30 years old
   - Managerial/supervisory experience preferably in mall/bazaar operation, management and promotion
   - Can implement strategic programs in mall revenue enhancement and marketing
   - Can work with minimum supervision
   - Pleasant personality and excellent interpersonal skills
5. **ASST. BUYER/MERCHANDISER (1)**
   - FEMALE
   - At least 1-2 years experience as an asst. buyer or merchandiser gained from convenience store and supermarket.
   - Excellent negotiation skills
   - Has good decision making, resourceful, with a sense of urgency and trustworthy
   - Graduate of marketing, and business management course

Interested applicants may send thru fax or e-mail comprehensive resume or apply in person at the following address not later than March 20, 2006. Look for Ms. Precy.

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Republic of the Philippines
DON HONORIO VENTURA COLLEGE of ARTS and TRADES
Bacolor, Pampanga

NOTICE OF VACANCY FOR COLLEGE PRESIDENT

The Board of Trustees of the DON HONORIO VENTURA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TRADES (DHVCAT) Bacolor, Pampanga formally and publicly announces the Search for COLLEGE PRESIDENT per Board Resolution No. 2, s. 2006 dated February 8, 2006.

The minimum qualifications for the position are as follows:

1. must be a Filipino citizen
2. preferably a holder of doctoral degree
3. preferably between 35 to 61 years old
4. must be morally upright
5. with recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe/industry
6. with at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with the following:

1. Detailed curriculum vitae and certified supporting documents;
2. Proposed Four Year Development Plan for the College consistent with the Vision, Mission and Thrusts of the College;
3. Results of neuro-psychiatric examination conducted by any government physician or any accredited health institution;
4. Medical Certificate from a government physician;
5. National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Clearance;
6. Ombudsman Clearance;
7. Civil Service Commission Clearance/Certificate of No Pending Administrative Case issued by the Administrative Officer of present employer / or previous employer; and
8. Certification of not being convicted in any administrative or criminal cases.

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit five (5) sets of documents in sealed envelopes to Ms. Evangeline S. Bondoc, Board Secretary, Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades, Bacolor, Pampanga on or before April 3, 2006.

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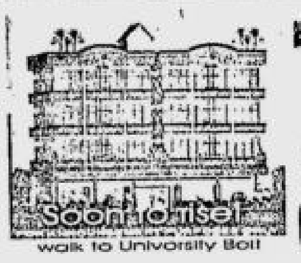

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that MA. ROSE VIRGINIE TAURO VILLACARLOS has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from MARIA-ROSE VIRGIE to MA. ROSE VIRGINIE in the birth certificate of MARIA-ROSE VIRGIE TALEON TAURO and whose parents are SANTIAGO TAURO and LEONILA TALEON.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than 27 March 2006.

(Sgd.) **ELISEO T. TULIVA**
Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI--March 10 & 17, 2006)

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Earth Day at the CCP

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES (CCP) TEAMS UP WITH HARIBON FOUNDATION, Winner Foundation, the La Sallian Institute for the Environment (Life), the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCP), Cycling Advocates (CYCAD), Organic Producers and Traders Association (OPTA) and GMA 7 for a whole-day package of activities celebrating Earth Day 2006 slated on April 22, Saturday, from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the CCP Liwasang Kalikasan. The day kicks off with a clean-up of the complex grounds by CCP employees and the opening of some 40 booths comprising the Earth Day Bazaar, with music by Edru Abraham's KontraGapi. The day unfolds with an on-the-spot art contest for kids, the flagdown of Cycling Advocates coming all the way from the Quezon Memorial Circle, and storytelling sessions under the trees. The day ends with a show of dance and music, highlighted by a fashion show of wearable art made from recycled and natural materials, designed by students of DLSU-College of Saint Benilde. The Liwasang Kalikasan is a lightly-wooded area along Roxas Boulevard located on the north eastern side of the CCP Complex, to be transformed into an ecological showcase and venue for cultural and educational activities in an urban forest park setting. For more information, call the CCP Visual Arts and Museo Division at 832-3702.

OBITUARIES

JOSE "PEPE" JACINTO LOMOTAN

Died in the grace of our Lord on March 15, 2006
at the age of 86.

His loving wife **MIGUELA SEMPIO PASCUAL**

Children, in-laws and grandchildren
BERNADETTE
MICAELA, MIGUEL, ANGELO (†) and GABRIEL

CLARIZA
JOSEPH MICHAEL

JG and IDA BAUTISTA
MONICA, LORENZO, MARINELLA, SOPHIA,
RAPHAELLA and DIEGO

JP and BOYSIE DEL ROSARIO
ANJO, JOEL and BEN

FROILAN and BETH ESGUERRA
FRANCESCA, ALEXA and ERICA

and sister
LUTGARDA (LETTY)

request relatives and friends to join them in prayers for his eternal repose.

His remains lie in state at the **Capilla De San Francisco, Sanctuario de San Antonio,** Mckinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Funeral Mass will be on Saturday, March 18, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. Mass to be followed by cremation.

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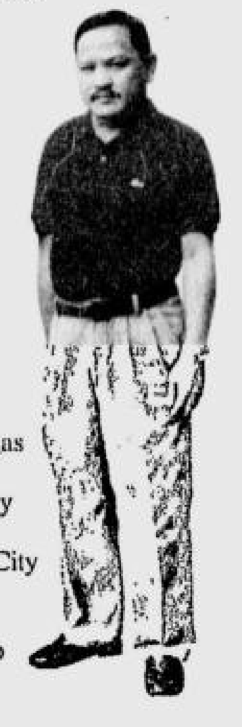

On March 17, 2006 – 4th Death Anniversary of

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Our Lady of Miraculous Medal – Subic Agoncillo, Batangas
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San Isidro Labrador Parish – Bo. San Isidro, Batangas City
St. James the Greater Parish – Ibaan, Batangas
St. Michael the Archangel Parish Church – Ilijan, Batangas City
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PAL earnings seen up despite higher cost

Increased passenger traffic a big boost

By Daxim L. Lucas

BAUTISTA

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST AIRLINE WILL likely report marginally higher earnings for its fiscal year 2005 ending on March 31, as higher passenger traffic helped offset increases in fuel costs.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday night, Philippine Airlines president Jaime Bautista said the company would make "slightly more than the $20 million posted last year."

PAL reports its financial statements to regulators in dollars as the bulk of its revenue is foreign currency-denominated.

Bautista said the airline—owned by tobacco and beer tycoon Lucio C. Tan—experienced a 4.8-percent increase in passenger traffic this year, helping offset the high cost of aviation fuel, which has pushed many of the world's largest airlines into the red.

On the average, PAL's fuel cost has risen by about 20 percent this year.

"Our net income is about the same [as last year's] but we will have better results from operations," he said.

Bautista also said the airline was aiming at record-high profits in fiscal year 2006, ending March 2007, although he declined to provide more details.

The PAL chief said the airline was undergoing a refleeting program whose aim was to completely replace its aging fleet of Boeing 737s for domestic operations.

The airline will take delivery of three short- to medium-haul Airbus A319s this year, and another A319 early next year, all acquired through a lease program.

Baustista said PAL was aiming at having a fleet of 18 A319s by the end of 2008, half of which to be leased with the rest to be bought outright.

PAL will need $840 million for the refleeting program, half of which will be borrowed from export credit agencies while the rest will be raised through commercial loans.

In line with efforts to boost revenues, Bautista said PAL would increase the number of flights to the United States.

Flights from Manila to Los Angeles will increase from the present nine to 10 a week, while those to San Francisco will increase from eight to nine a week.

Another flight to Beijing will also be added, bringing the weekly total to four.

He added that PAL's flights to Canada were also lucrative, but the airline could no longer add flights to Vancouver because it already used up all its entitlements under existing air agreements.

Women farmers' new project

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

LAST MARCH 10, THE 29-year-old Samahang Kababaihang Barangay (KBB) and the Samahang Kababaihan Development Foundation (KBDF), composed mostly of grassroots women farmers, celebrated the first year anniversary of their newest program—the San Miguel, Bulacan Ten-Year Community Based Health Program (CBHP). This was done on the occasion of women's month and the birthday of the late Ka Emma Sta. Ana, their leader.

The CBHP is the KBB-KBDF partnership with the local government under the leadership of Mayor Edmundo Jose "Pop" Buencamino, the Physicians for Peace, and many other NGOs.

Community programs

Among the CBHP accomplishments reported by KBB president Gloria Manapol were: 291 cataract and Pterygium surgeries performed with the help of the Sukob and the Bulacan Society of Opthalmologists; Ka Ising Quizon and Ka Tindeng Manuson three-week trainers' training on the tuberculosis program sponsored by the Physicians for Peace; hospital equipment donated by the Physicians for Peace to support the rural health unit upgrading; 18,000 mango seedlings produced (in partnership with the municipal nursery), and 120 amputees screened and 40 prosthesis (artificial legs) distributed.

In this year's Women's Month, the KBB identified three flagship agriculture projects that would help its new development thrust in health. These women farmers have gone from pigs (agriculture) to toys (small industry), to politics (good governance), and to health (with agriculture as a key component). These projects build on each other to complete an entire holistic approach. The KBB is using agriculture as a main tool to promote a good diet that is essential to good health. The three projects are *malungay*, mango, and dairy production.

Malungay is one of the most nutritious vegetables in the country, and is actively promoted by the Management Association of the Philippines' Agribusiness Foundation. It can easily be propagated as it grows easily without much need for maintenance. The KBB and KBDF will have contests to encourage participation and motivate performance.

Carabao dairy dispersal

A year ago, Agriwatch launched a carabao breeder project with the KBB. This year, the KBB has decided to raise funds to be able to disperse 50 carabao breeders. San Miguel, Bulacan's original name was San Miguel De Mayumo. They make the best *pastilles de leche*. However, San Miguel has to import its carabao milk from other provinces because they consume more than they can produce. What is more, the excess milk that will be produced under the program can be consumed by the community, contributing to its health program. This direction is consistent with an Agriwatch finding that, in many instances, it is more economical to produce dairy milk rather than import it.

Mango variety upgrading

The late Ka Emma Sta. Ana, in her time, led the KBB in planting one million mango trees in the members' backyards. The KBB succeeded. There are now mango buying stations in San Miguel and a big mango processing plant in Malolos that gets its supply mostly from San Miguel.

Last year, the KBB launched a mango variety upgrading program with the help of the DA's Philippine Mango Center. Already 18,000 mango seedlings have been grown and ready to be grafted to become mother trees. The target of the KBB is to raise 100,000 mango seedlings a year in the next 10 years.

Best women's program

The KBB is the same group that won the award from the United Nations for being the Best Rural Women's Project in Asia in 1984 and the Best Women's Development Project in the World in 1989.

The San Miguel, Bulacan Ten-Year Community Based Health Program is another step forward to promote the concept of building transformative communities. The project demonstrates how the community takes responsibility for their own health program. It is premised on the principle that health is a basic human right of every individual member of the community. It is the duty of everyone to do his share in making sure that the health of each person is looked after as a community responsibility. For more information on this, please call KBB's ka Tindeng Manuson (044-6780609).

Added note

Congratulations to Inday Campo, president of All Community Based Forestry Management Agreement (CBFMA) People Organizations in the Philippines covering 2.2 million hectares. Last March 13, Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes immediately acted positively on her strong stand that all automatic CBFMA cancellations ordered by other officials be stopped. Called *lola* by DENR officials, Campo has shown the effectiveness of a true woman farmer leader during this women's month of March.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.)

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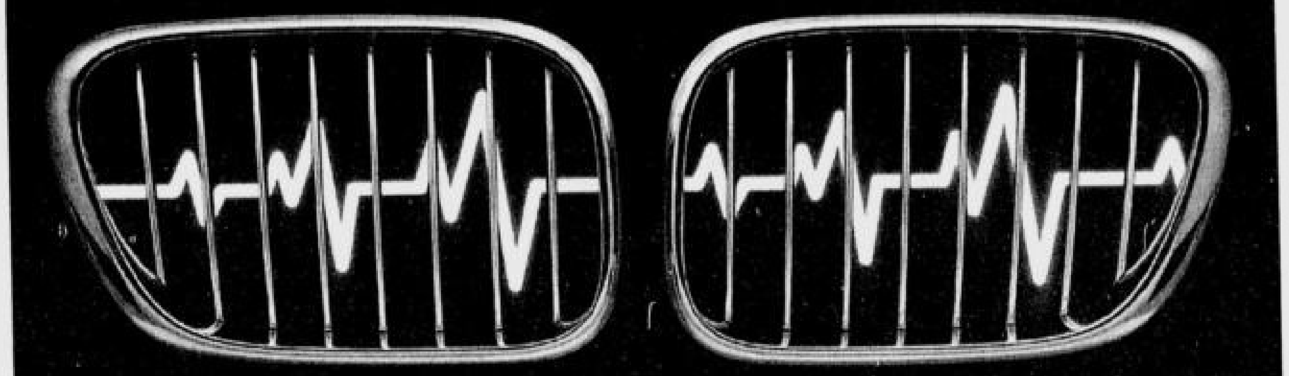

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Jewelmer director learns about working in RP

PIERRE FALLOURD, TQM AND ASSISTANT managing director for Jewelmer, could have insisted that his knowledge and western expertise were enough to equip him to work in the Philippines. But like any executive worth his salt, he recognized that to gain better mileage, he needed to tailor-fit what he knew to the environment he found himself in.

Pierre has traveled in and out of the country for the past seven years. He was finally asked to settle in the Philippines with the objective of "applying his knowledge and experience in Europe into the Asian setting."

The decision to work and settle here however was not an easy one to make for Pierre. He knew he had to adjust and synergize his personal capabilities with the way things are done locally.

It was on the road to assimilating the local culture that Pierre came across the Executive Master in Business Administration program of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). The president of Jewelmer International, Manuel Conjuangco, who was himself a Triple A awardee of AIM, highly recommended it.

With the support of management, Pierre availed himself of the opportunity for further studies. Despite juggling responsibilities at work with the demands of the program, he acknowledged that the time and effort put into it was well worth it. To him, "the AIM-EMBA offered an excellent advantage because of good professors who provided sound theory grounded on practice. While presenting a global perspective on business, they helped me understand the local and regional culture."

Pierre's opportunity to test and actually practice this style of leadership came when he implemented his Strategic Management Project or SMP-a unique feature of the Executive MBA Program which required participants to implement a breakthrough business improvement within the organization.

For him, the SMP was a realistic endeavor for the reason that it required a tripartite agreement between the company, school and the student. And because it was executed within the duration of the EMBA, close monitoring allowed for the results to be visible.

The regular meetings conducted to ensure the effective implementation of the SMP became a venue for Pierre to convey ideas and enlist the team members' support and participation in the project. The close interaction with his team members allowed him to put into practice the things he learned about better communication and working within the local culture.

Where quantifiable results and financial success should have been enough, Pierre went beyond that and came to an appreciation of success becoming more significant when relationships are given importance as well. "There is more to business than just a successful transaction, the quality of the relationships with co-workers/client/employees are actually more important than strictly the financial aspects."

The 8th batch of the EMBA will commence on April 17 in Manila. Call Melay Jimenez or Grace Reynoso at 892-4011 for more information about the program.

SM DONATES P3M TO VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS

SM Investments Corp, the publicly listed holding company of the SM Group, recently turned over P3 million to the Association of Volunteer Fire Chiefs and Fire Fighters of the Philippines. Since its establishment in 1987, the Association of Fire Chiefs and Firefighters of the Philippines Inc has played a major role in minimizing the loss of lives and properties from fires and disasters. Since that time, the association has already grown to 38 brigades with more than a hundred fire trucks and ambulances, and more than 1,800 firefighters and paramedics. The Association was also the first to activate a region-wide emergency telephone reporting system through hotline 16016. In recognition of its efforts, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza donated a 1,000-sqm lot at the Manila Harbour Center to establish their headquarters. SM's donation will be used to put up a basketball gymnasium in the new building. Shown is SM Prime Holding president Hans Sy (center) handing over the check to the Association during the recent takeover. With him are the Association's senior executive advisers Samuel Chan and Robert Yu, executive VP Mary Ng, SM Investment executive VP and CFO Jose Sio, the Association's lifetime honorary president George Go Pen Siong, senior executive adviser Alfonso Uy, vice president Lorenzo Ku, board chair Jose Go, senior executive adviser Benito Chua and vice president Sy Guo Fen.

'LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour' pedals to true identity

ANYWHERE YOU GO, THERE'S A PILIPINO making others realize that the Philippines, with its culture and identity, is filled with so many things its people can be truly proud of and be happy with.

This is what the "Galing Pilipino Movement" (GPM) is all about. GPM is a non-profit, private sector initiative that affirms and recognizes what is good and excellent in being Pilipino, propagates a different brand of heroism—the kind that happens everyday. GPM's campaign is aimed to raise Pilipino pride and heighten our collective dignity. The campaign was founded by a group of Pilipinos led by Erlinda de Guzman.

A bunch of young, active and nationalistic Pilipinos realized that one of the gravest problems faced by the Philippines today is Filipinos not believing in their nationality and doubting their identity. Thus, the "LayBYKE Mabuhay Tour" was born, which aims to constantly remind Pilipinos that we are tough, resilient, and exceptional.

The "LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour" commemorates the Fall of Bataan (Death March) in reverse and appreciating the courage showed by the Filipino soldiers in the last World War II. History books do not highlight enough the great story of the Battle of Bataan, wherein a historic allegiance between Filipinos and Americans was forged.

The "LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour" from April 5 to 8 will be a fresh interpretation of the Death March through a biking experience. There will be send-off and welcome ceremonies at the starting line and at all stops. In contrast to the Death March where the number of marchers decreased day to day, this time bikers from communities along the route will be encouraged to join so that the size of the group will increase from town to town. Historical markers along the route will be visited, with simple rites.

The Mabuhay Tour is an educational-cultural bike tour starting from Capas, Tarlac, passing through San Fernando in Pampanga, towards Mariveles in Bataan, with culminating activities and celebrations in Balanga, Bataan.

At each stop-over, local festivities will be organized, highlighting the unique "Galing Pilipino" practices in the area in terms of culture, food, traditions, and historical, significance. Cyclist groups will be invited to participate in this non-competitive, fun tour with pocket activities for each site stop-over, namely Eco-Agro Tourism, Bisita Pilipinas, Natural Farming Seminar, Yugyog Tugtog Pinoy, and ends with a grand celebration in Balanga, Bataan.

Eco-agro tourism, including GPM'S program Bisita Pilipinas, opens to tourists the opportunity to stay in environment friendly ecological farms or country estates, and camping grounds.

Through the Galing Pilipino Natural Farming Seminar, farmers and hog farmers are empowered to develop a low-cost yet high-yielding system of farming.

The Yugyog Tugtog Pinoy project aims to promote the rich musical culture of Filipinos by promoting the use of various local ethnic instruments.

For more details on GPM's various programs and projects, membership details, and to know more about the LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour, log on to www.galingpilipino.org or call 631-3932, 0917-8354829, 0916-2546069, or fax 633-1089.

Spalding–not just a ball

SPALDING, A LEADER OF INNOVATION AND QUALITY IN THE SPORTING goods category and long known for its dominance in basketball, is introducing its latest product innovation. You've seen Spalding in National Basketball Association (NBA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL) and Arena Football League (AFL). Now, Spalding is not just a ball. Grab the latest designs of Spalding T-shirts, jerseys, muscle shirts, shorts and footwear at your favorite sports shops. Spalding is available at Planet Sports, The Athlete's Foot, Sports Warehouse and department stores nationwide.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
POEA Bldg., Ortigas Avenue cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City 1501
P.O. Box 175 Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila
Tel. 722-1144, 722-1155 • E-mail: info@poea.gov.ph
Website: www.poea.gov.ph

GOVERNING BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 01

Series of 2006

WHEREAS, the unchecked outward migration of our highly skilled workers employed in strategic industries will inevitably have an adverse effect on the viability, sustainability and future of our vital domestic industries;

WHEREAS, some of these workers are performing mission critical skills (MCS) or those skills that reflect the primary function of the organization without which mission critical work cannot be completed and which skills are internally developed and require extensive training, thus, not easily replaceable;

WHEREAS, POEA has devised a framework that would project the shortage of mission critical skills as a result of outward migration taking into consideration the local demand for MCS, inventory of qualified employees, number of MCS deployed overseas and the prospective entrants of MCS over a given period of time;

WHEREAS, as mandated under Section 5 of RA8042, the government, can adopt a policy that would address the injurious effect of the unchecked outward migration of mission critical skills on our national interest and the economy, without curtailing the right of workers to gainful employment;

NOW, THEREFORE, the POEA Governing Board in a meeting duly convened hereby resolves the following:

1. Adopt the POEA recommended framework in determining the level of skills supply and demand and the occurrence of shortage of mission critical skills in a particular industry.
2. Adopt a policy of encouraging local employers to undertake measures to dissuade their workers who are performing MCS from leaving their employ thru an improved package of incentives such as retention bonus, stock options, increased retirement bonus, medical benefits, housing and car loan facility, among others.
3. Adopt a policy of encouraging establishments to undertake alternative schemes to contract migration thru the secondment/crossposting of their employees to their overseas clients.
4. Require MCS workers in industries which POEA has determined to have impending MCS shortage, to comply with the following as conditions for the processing of their overseas employment contracts:
   a) Notice to employer should be given at least six months prior to any termination or resignation from employment; and
   b) Copy of the above notice, duly received by employer.

Done in the City of Manila, this 1st day of March 2006.

(Sgd.) **PATRICIA A. STO.TOMAS**
Chairperson

(Sgd.) **GREGORIO S. OCA**
Member

(Sgd.) **GUILLERMINA T. GABOR**
Member

(Sgd.) **ISIDRO Q. ALIGADA**
Member

(Sgd.) **LEONARDO B. DE OCAMPO**
Member

(Sgd.) **ROSALINDA DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ**
Member

(PDI - March 17, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Bldg. 5, 2nd Floor Energy Complex, Merritt Road.
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320 Local 5295

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

	Approved Budget
Purchase of Capillary Tubing under GQ - 516719	PHP 3,000,000.00
Purchase of Electrical Wire under GE - 513648	PHP 2,595,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Alejandro V. Andres starting March 02, 2006, from 9:30 a.m to 3:30 p.m and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held March 14, 2006 for GQ-516719 and March 15, 2006 for GE-513648, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property, and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Purchasing Office Wall Clock Time) of March 30, 2006 for GQ-516719 and March 31, 2006 for GE-513648. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI - March 17, 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines

Procurement of a Contract for the Construction of the Riviera Sports and Country Club, Inc. (RSCCI) Main Clubhouse in Silang, Cavite

1. The **AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS)**, through the Corporate Budget for the contract approved by the Governing Board intends to apply the sum of **Two Hundred Twenty Three Million Three Hundred Two Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Two Philippine Pesos (Php 223,302,272.00)** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Construction of the Riviera Sports and Country Club, Inc. (RSCCI) Main Clubhouse. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The AFP-RSBS now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for Construction of the RSCCI Main Clubhouse, consisting of three (3) contiguous buildings: a Sports Club, a Health Club and a Pavilion situated at By-pass Road, Aguinaldo Hi-way in Silang, Cavite. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs **on or before 5:00 P.M. of 31 March 2006 at CMA-C RSBS Building 424 Capinpin Avenue Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City** and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: **17 April 2006 at 9:00 A.M.** at the AFP-RSBS Board Room, AFP-RSBS Building, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the AFP-RSBS and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Twenty Thousand Philippine Pesos (Php 20,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on **19 April 2006**.
6. The AFP-RSBS will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders **on 04 May 2006 at 10:00 A.M. at the AFP-RSBS Board Room, AFP-RSBS Building 424 Capinpin Avenue, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City**.
7. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below **on or before 19 May 2006 at 9:00 A.M.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit and in an amount of **Two Million Two hundred Thirty Three Thousand Twenty Two and 72/100 Philippine Pesos (Php 2,233,022.72)** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be **on 19 May 2006 at 9:05 A.M. at the AFP-RSBS Board Room, AFP-RSBS Building 424 Capinpin Avenue, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on 19 May 2006.
8. The AFP-RSBS reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System
AFP-RSBS Building, 424 Capinpin Avenue
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. 9114071 local 266/289/281

(Sgd.) **FRANKLIN C ACOSTA**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 17 & 24, 2006)

CBRE SPECIAL SEALED BIDDING
CB RICHARD ELLIS
ALL PROPERTIES FOR SALE ARE ON AN 'AS IS WHERE IS' BASIS
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Or TEXT us and WE will CALL you
JIBONG 0922.8042496 DON 0920.9216150 MIKE 0917.5260614 EARLY 0917.8566885

MEGA MANILA PROPERTIES
BULACAN
LOT 1 – LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 720 sqm.
Bo. Camias, San Miguel
Minimum Bid Price: 102,750.00
LOT 2 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 240 sqm.
L18, B17 (St. James St), Tugatog, Malanday, Valenzuela
Minimum Bid Price 554,400.00
LOT 3 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 392 sqm.
Barrio San Jose, Baliwag
Minimum Bid Price 905,800.00
LOT 4 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,013 sqm.
Lots 5605-A & 5606-C, Bagna Malolos
Minimum Bid Price: 3,241,000.00
LOT 5 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 966 sqm.
Maleta, Valenzuela
Minimum Bid Price 15,000,000.00
CALOOCAN
LOT 6 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 60 sqm.
413 Damayan St., Maypajo
Minimum Bid Price 651,000.00
QUEZON CITY
LOT 7 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 457 sqm.
Florentina St., Bgy Gulod Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price 287,000.00
LOT 8 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area. 1,438 sqm.
Florentina St. Bgy Gulod Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price 903,000.00
LAGUNA
LOTS 9 & 10 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 240 + 813 sqm.
Biñan
Minimum Bid Price 1,218,000.00
MANILA
LOT 11 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 357 sqm.
Lara/Valderama, San Nicolas District, Manila
Minimum Bid Price 2,879,000.00

PARANAQUE
LOT 12 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 402 sqm.
No. 5 Tel Aviv cor. Tehran Streets, Merville Park Subd.
Minimum Bid Price 2,409,000.00
RIZAL
LOT 13 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,803 sqm.
Bo. San Isidro, Rodriguez (Montalban)
Minimum Bid Price 117,600.00
LOT 14 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,575 sqm.
Bo. San Jose, Rodriguez (Montalban)
Minimum Bid Price 110,600.00
LOT 15 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,147 sqm.
Bo. Pantay, Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price 240,800.00
PROVINCIAL PROPERTIES
LUZON
BATAAN
LOT 16 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,926 sqm.
Block 12 Lots 18-20, & Block 113 Lots 1-6, Apollo Subd., Brgy Kaparangan, Orani
Minimum Bid Price 2,048,200.00
LOT 17 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 25,753 sqm.
St. Joseph Homes Subdivision, Bo. Mulawin, Orani
Minimum Bid Price 18,027,100.00
BENGUET
LOT 18 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 776 sqm.
Site 2, Alta Verde Subdivision, Bgy. Irisan, Tuba
Minimum Bid Price 583,500.00
LOT 19 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 771 sqm.
Site 1, Alta Verde Subdivision, Bgy. Irisan, Tuba
Minimum Bid Price 870,000.00
CAGAYAN
LOT 20 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 8,000 sqm.
Brgy. Pongol, Gonzaga, Cagayan
Minimum Bid Price 56,000.00

NUEVA ECIJA
LOT 21 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 106,760 sqm.
Barrio Burgos, Lupao, Nueva Ecija
Minimum Bid Price 329,000.00
LOT 22 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,345 sqm.
Bgy. Rio Chico, Gen. Tinio
Minimum Bid Price 15,000.00
LOT 23 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,129 sqm.
Site 1, Bo. San Agustin, San Jose City
Minimum Bid Price: 44,100.00
LOT 24 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,129 sqm.
Site 2, Bo. San Agustin, San Jose City
Minimum Bid Price 44,100.00
LOT 25 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 5,000 sqm.
Bgy. Malasin, San Jose City
Minimum Bid Price 70,000.00
LOT 26 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 15,212 sqm.
Bgy. Palestina, San Jose City
Minimum Bid Price 228,000.00
LOT 27 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 20,509 sqm.
Bgy. Bangad, Cabanatuan City
Minimum Bid Price 287,000.00
LOT 28 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 64,085 sqm.
Bgy. Gen. Luna, Carangian
Minimum Bid Price 769,000.00
LOT 29 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 33,889 sqm.
Bgy. Puncan, Carangian
Minimum Bid Price 711,900.00
LOT 30 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 6,903 sqm.
Bo. Santiago, Cabanatuan City
Minimum Bid Price 966,000.00
ISABELA
LOT 31 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 10,219 sqm.
Bgy. District 1, Cauayan
Minimum Bid Price 250,000.00
LOT 32 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 10,108 sqm.
Bgy. San Luis, Cauayan
Minimum Bid Price 250,000.00
LOT 33 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 67,339 sqm.
Poblacion Centro, San Pablo
Minimum Bid Price 3,031,000.00

VISAYAS
CEBU
LOT 34 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 10,364 sqm.
Lots 3338-A, 3342, 3344, Talisay
Minimum Bid Price: 144,000.00
LOT 35 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,715 sqm.
near Banawa Elementary School Barrio Banawa
Minimum Bid Price: 3,601,500.00
LOT 36 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 2,068 sqm.
Beside White Hills Subdivision Banawa
Minimum Bid Price: 2,100,000.00
LOT 37 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 4,315 sqm.
Barangay Tungkop, Minglanilla
Minimum Bid Price: 694,400.00
LOT 38 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 16,677 sqm.
Barangay Poblacion Ward III, Minglanilla
Minimum Bid Price 1,050,700.00
LOT 39 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 324 sqm.
Tupas/Tres de Abril/Pahina, San Nicolas, Cebu City
Minimum Bid Price 5,508,000.00
TACLOBAN
LOT 40 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area. 1,153 sqm.
Bgy. 83-C Taguktik, Tacloban City, Leyte
Minimum Bid Price 322,000.00
MINDANAO
COTABATO
LOT 41 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 4,176 sqm.
Poblacion, Makilala, North
Minimum Bid Price 233,800.00
OZAMIS
LOT 42 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,624 sqm.
Bgy. Bagacay
Minimum Bid Price 190,400.00
PAGADIAN CITY
LOT 43 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area. 350 sqm.
Purok Pagatpat 2, Bgy. Sta. Lucia
Minimum Bid Price 88,200.00
LOT 44 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 719 sqm.
Bgy. Balangasan
Minimum Bid Price 161,000.00

PRIME PROPERTIES
CAVITE
LOT 45 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 204,228 sqm.
Barrio Sahud Ulan, Tanza (WITH BEACH FRONT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
MANILA
LOT 46 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 700 sqm.
Honorio Lopez Boulevard, Tondo (COMMERCIAL LOT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
RIZAL
LOT 47 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 28,006 sqm.
Hillside Homes Subd., Bgy. Concepcion, Baras (COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
BATANGAS
LOT 48 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 747 sqm.
C.M. Recto cor. Solaman Streets Lipa City (COMMERCIAL LOT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
TARLAC
LOT 49 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,667 sqm.
McArthur Highway, Tarlac (COMMERCIAL LOT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
CAMARINES SUR
LOT 50 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 6,627 sqm.
Daet Sipocot Road, Bgy. Impig Sipocot (COMMERCIAL LOT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
CEBU
LOT 51 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 95,537 sqm.
E.H. Bascon Street, Bo. Dumlog Talisay (WITH BEACH FRONT)
Bid Price BEST OFFER
CBRE CB RICHARD ELLIS
WE ARE NOW ACCREDITING BROKERS!

ProductFILES

'RAV-ishing' rack

THE COUNTRY'S HOTTEST SPORTS utility vehicle just got hotter with Thule's line of roof racks and load carriers. Geared towards active individuals and families who like to explore the great outdoors, Thule provides you with the solution to maximize the load capacity of your car, AUV or SUV. Unlike locally manufactured load carriers, Thule has an easy snap-on, snap-off feature which lets you install the load carriers with ease. With Thule, there's no drilling required, it's guaranteed safe from rust, and aerodynamically designed to complement the exterior design of the vehicle. Thule's line of load carriers are 100-percent machine made from Sweden and has passed the four seasons test of the ISO. Thule is also an accredited OEM designer and supplier of load carriers for brands such as Ford, Volvo, Land Rover, Nissan, Toyota, BMW and Mercedes Benz.

All Thule roof racks and boxes are waterproof and theft proof. The aerodynamic design provides a sleek look to the vehicle. Shown is a Toyota RAV4 equipped with a Thule roof rack. For more information on how to gear up and make your vacation a more adventurous one, load up and visit its display at Toyota Pasong Tamo or the Thule-EGR showrooms in Ortigas Avenue (744-6367) and Pasong Tamo (892-7847), or log on to www.thule.com.

Visa pushes electronic payment systems

DAVAO CITY—MINDANAO'S TRADE AND tourism would get a big boost if more establishments would adopt electronic payment systems, payment processing and card company Visa International said.

James Dixon, Visa country manager for the Philippines, said here that a growing number of people now want to pay for their purchases using the electronic payment system because it is a safer alternative to carrying cash.

Dixon said business establishments in Mindanao could cash in on the electronic payment system if they offered it to the public, tourists especially.

For example, a traveler visiting Mindanao would either get traveler's checks or bring huge amounts of cash because of the lack of merchants using the electronic payment system, Dixon said.

He said merchants could exploit the spending habit of tourists who were more comfortable using their credit cards than paying in cash.

Dixon said a Visa study showed that tourists preferred to settle their bills using the electronic payment system.

The cards also do away with the problem of exchanging foreign currencies for pesos.

He said that in 2005 alone, spending by tourists through the Visa electronic payment system reached P50 billion, or an increase of 46 percent from the previous year.

"It is estimated that 35 percent of tourist spend is made using a Visa card," he said.

Visa offers various options for its electronic payment system - the credit card, debit card and the prepaid card.

"It's easier to get a resort reservation with the system and easier to make payments, too," Dixon said. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Sarangani farmers earn from contract growing

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MAASIM, SARANGANI PROVINCE—"I thought I was only dreaming," said Pring Malo, a B'laan farmer who earlier leased his 1.9-hectare land to pineapple giant Dole Philippines Inc. (Dolefil), as he looked at the bundle of bills in his hand.

It was the first time Malo held such a large amount—P121,000 in cash. His biggest income since he started farming was less than P10,000 per season.

Malo, a father of six, was the first pineapple contract grower to harvest in sitio Tahakayo in Amsipit village here.

Just two years ago, his life in the area was a nightmare.

His family could hardly eat three meals a day. Most of the time, they subsisted on root crops.

His luck changed when he learned of Dolefil's plan to expand operations in the area.

Malo entered into a lease contract with the pineapple firm, under which Dolefil rented his land for P10,000 a hectare a year.

He was allowed to till his land, given financing and a pledge that Dolefil would buy his harvest.

His first income from contract growing reached P444,000.

Minus the expenses and cash advances he got from the pineapple giant, Malo's net income was P121,000.

The transformation of Malo's place into a pineapple field started in 2003 when Mayor Anecito Lopez Jr. and future governor Miguel Dominguez met with Elvys Dee, former Dolefil top executive.

When Dee hinted that Dolefil was planning to expand, Lopez immediately offered Maasim as a possible site.

Dolefil started its expansion project in the province sometime in April 2004.

Now, the pineapple company has more than 400 hectares planted to pineapple in the village, with about 91 contract growers, including Malo.

The company had said it still wanted to expand.

For other villagers, that was good news for they too want to earn as much as Malo.

NEA bucks debt deal

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The National Electrification Administration (NEA) said the conversion of electric cooperatives into stock cooperatives or stock corporations would mean the revocation of the government's condonation of their loans.

In a legal advisory on Feb. 16 that was released recently, the NEA said electric cooperatives that chose to convert within 10 years from 2003 would risk repaying their loans to the NEA that had been assumed by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm).

NEA's advisory said the conversion into a stock entity of an electric cooperative was considered an act of transfer of ownership, and this would mean that the cooperative would have to resume paying its loans. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

April 6, 2006

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article IV of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on Thursday, 06 April 2006, at 9:00 A.M., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order.
2. Certification of Notice.
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders on April 7, 2005 and the Special Meeting on November 11, 2005.
5. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31, 2005 incorporated in the Annual Report.
6. Approval and Confirmation of all Acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI.
7. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors.
8. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration.
9. Declaration of Stock Dividend.
10. Directors' Bonus.
11. Other Matters.

In accordance with Article XII of the said By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from March 7, 2006 to April 6, 2006. Only Stockholders of record as of March 7, 2006 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the said meeting.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 19th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 5:00 P.M. of March 27, 2006. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 29, 2006 at 4:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. AQUINO**
Vice President &
Corporate Secretary

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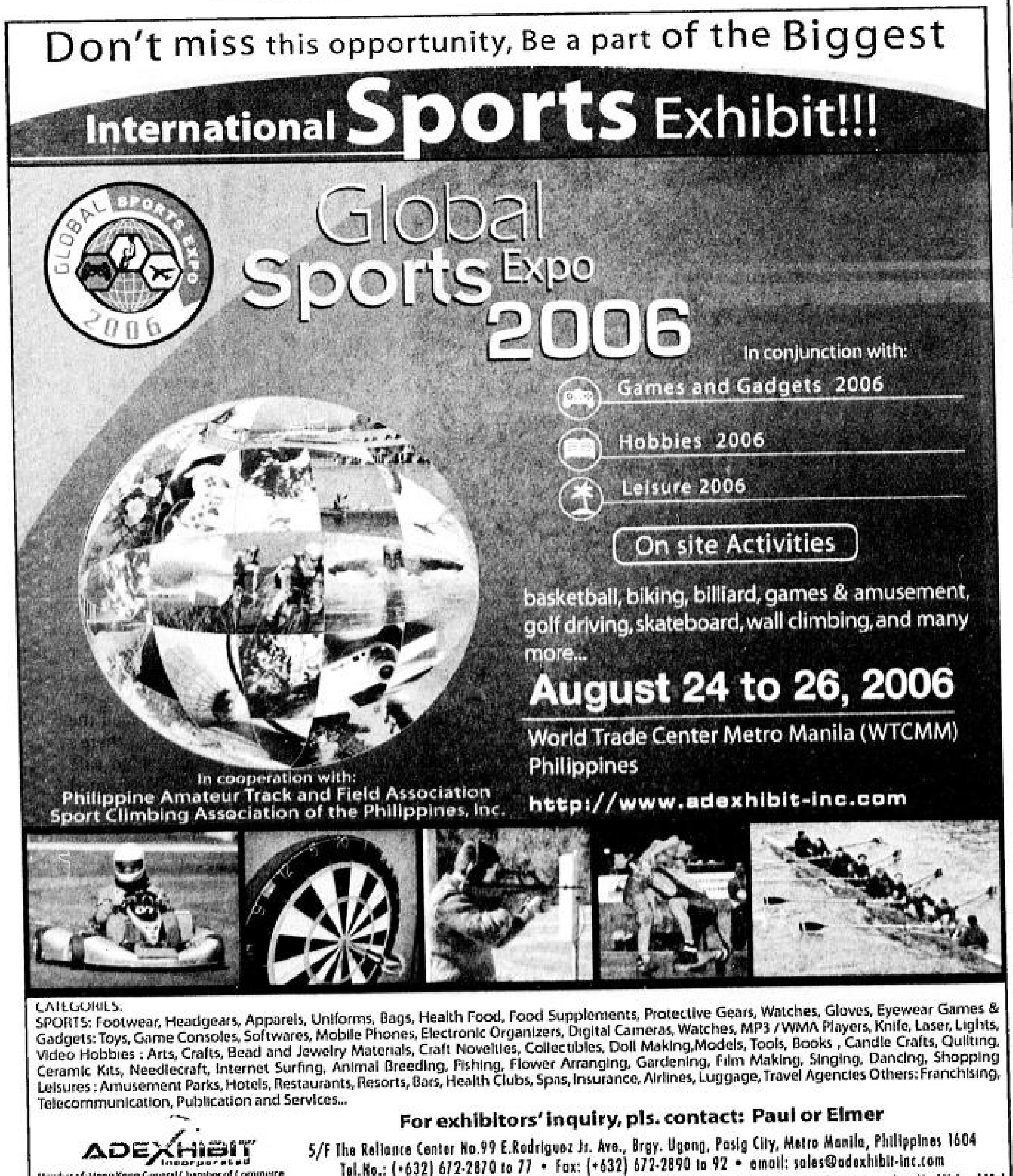

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BUSINESS

Commercial lending up

By Doris C. Dumlao

COMMERCIAL LENDING PICKED UP by 3 percent in January from last year on higher demand by financial institutions and real estate firms, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

The lending growth posted in January, which brought outstanding commercial loans to P1.56 trillion, was an improvement from the marginal 0.9-percent rise in December.

The financial institutions, real estate and business services sector posted the biggest loan growth of 19.3 percent, followed by the community, social and personal services sector (7.6 percent) and the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector (7.4 percent).

But the BSP reported a drop in lending to other key sectors, such as construction (15.2 percent), mining and quarrying (9.1 percent); electricity, gas and water (7.5 percent) and manufacturing (7.4 percent).

There was likewise a decline in outstanding loans to wholesale and retail trade (4.7 percent) and the transportation, storage and communication sectors (4.4 percent).

"Commercial bank lending activity remains moderate as a result of prevailing high levels of nonperforming loans (NPLs) and the resulting cautious lending stance of most commercial banks as well as sluggish corporate demand," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

He said the BSP remained focused on its efforts to strengthen overall asset quality in the banking sector as a means of encouraging lending activity to the real sector.

Earlier this week, Congress passed a bill reviving the Special Purpose Vehicle Law, which aims to clean up the banking system's bad assets through fiscal incentives in asset transfers.

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Helen Clark on Thursday visited San Miguel Corp.'s headquarters in Mandaluyong City. Ms Clark was welcomed by SMC chair and CEO Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. (right) and SMC president and COO Ramon S. Ang. SMC has investments in Australia and New Zealand through its subsidiaries.

DOF fears impact of bill on perks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS EXPRESSED concern that the fiscal incentives rationalization bill passed by Congress would not stem huge revenue losses from generous tax perks, and could even lead to an increase in foregone taxes.

The DOF therefore is preparing its own draft of the rationalization plan, which it would submit to the Senate, in the hope that the upper chamber would adopt it.

According to DOF estimates, the government loses about P300 billion a year in potential revenues due to the granting of fiscal incentives, including tax and duty exemptions granted to enterprises in priority industries.

Businesses enjoying fiscal incentives include those registered with the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

The source said the DOF has yet to finish computing the impact of the House bill, but said initial indications showed that it would lead to revenue losses.

The finance official said one provision of the house bill that the DOF wanted amended was the granting of a maximum 20-year income tax holiday to enterprises covered by the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP).

The official said that while the House bill would achieve the purpose of consolidating several fiscal-incentives laws into one, it would defeat the government's objective of arresting huge foregone revenues because incentives were hardly reduced.

The source said the DOF would likewise push for the creation of an inter-agency body to serve as the policy maker on the granting of fiscal incentives.

The House bill, which adopted provisions of the bill proposed by the BOI, the BOI will be the policy-making body and administrator of the fiscal incentives at the same time.

The DOF prefers an inter-agency body rather than a single office to handle policy-making matters related to fiscal incentives to balance the interest of concerned government agencies.

Gov't to keep trade policies

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY IS LEAVING BEHIND AN OLD economy and political order to push ahead as part of a globalized world economy, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said.

Speaking before a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce, Ms Arroyo blasted local interest groups that oppose the country's active participation in world trade as well as those against her administration.

The President said these people were clinging to discredited economic thoughts.

"I am committed to micro-finance and entrepreneurship, not micromanagement," she said. "I am for good jobs, not mindless mobs."

Answering the Apcac meeting's theme "Is the world really flat?," the Chief Executive said "Yes," adding that the government was sustaining efforts to make the economy conducive to business and investment.

The theme alludes to the bestselling book by New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedmand that espoused free trade and globalization.

But Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said that world was not flat enough for him.

Focusing on current efforts in the World Trade Organization on a new round of negotiations, Favila said a "flat" world was one where each economy could operate within the same rules simply because each players was just as strong as the next one.

The trade chief added that the government would continue to take steps in ensuring that trade with other economies were "fair" for Filipinos, saying it would only agree on tariff reduction provided that developed countries remove trade practices like subsidies on local producers.

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East of Galleria truly embodies the ideal of comfort and convenience, offering the best of both worlds with the choice of either bi-level or loft-type units. Available in one, two and three-bedroom units, East of Galleria assures residents of utmost privacy in condo living as the master's bedroom is located a level above the dining, kitchen and living areas. High ceilings, airy atmosphere and expansive glass windows feature breathtaking views of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club as well as a multitude of magnificent skylines.

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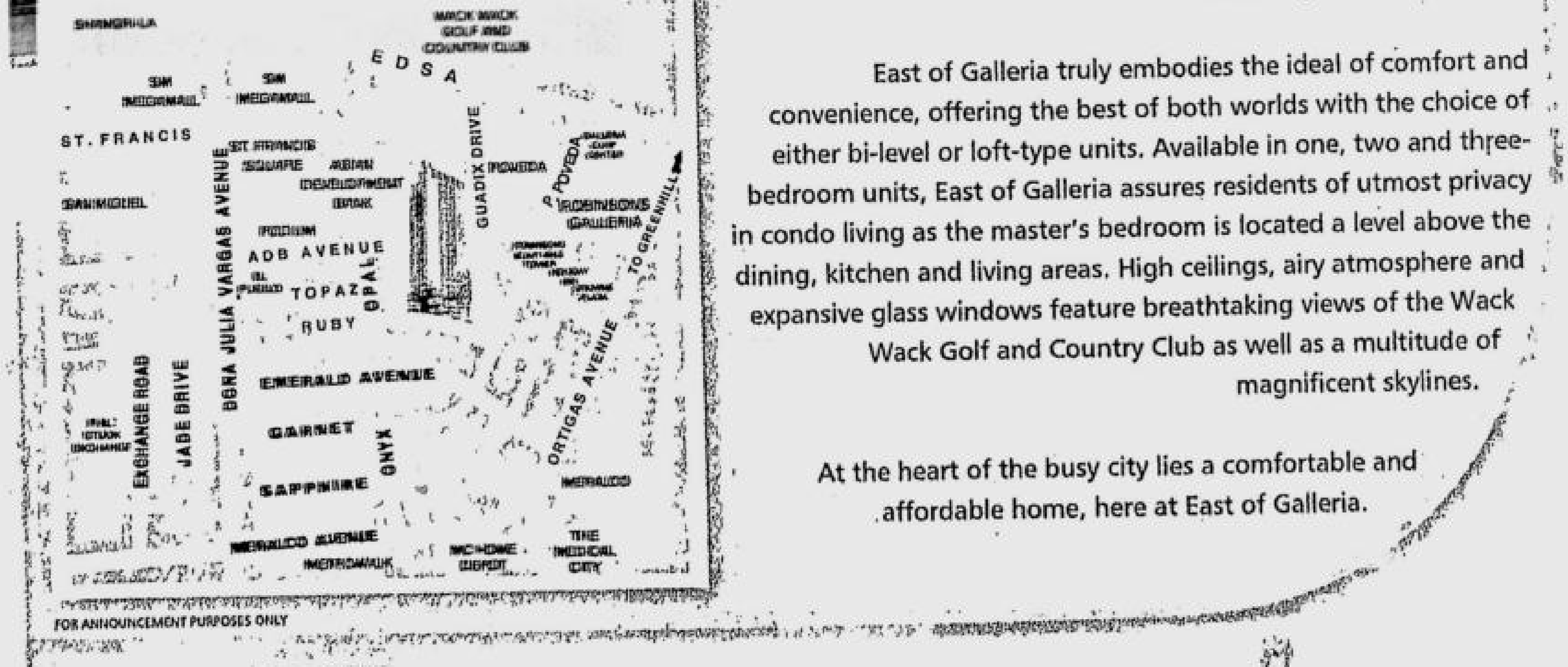

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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

She'd rather get customers than job offers

Average student who dabbles in dog food and sugarcane juice wins marketing tilt

ROSLYN Chua (right), 21, a graduating management student of Ateneo de Manila University, raises her glass after hearing her name called out as batch valedictorian in the 2006 Agora Youth Awards, which recognizes outstanding marketing students. In photo are the other winners: (from left) national finalist Vivien Betsy Fuentebella of Southville Foreign Colleges, and Maria Kris Llanes, also from Ateneo.

AT 21, ROSLYN Chua confesses she has "not won anything" in her life, not even a raffle prize. She also has a habit of dousing every hot praise. "I'm just an average student from an average family."

The graduating student of Ateneo de Manila University, however, is big on hot ideas. And these ideas are what made her stand out among more than 100 other students all over the country who vied for the recently held 2006 Agora Youth Awards mounted by the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA), the umbrella organization of marketing practitioners in the country. The awards recognize the best and the brightest marketing students and organizations today.

Roslyn, a BS Management major with a minor on Entrepreneurship, was named valedictorian among seven national winners for breezing her way through case studies—from dog food to a local portal. Her income-generating marketing strategy for Yehey.com to facilitate online payment transactions for government agencies clinched her the title.

SHE'D RATHER/ B2-2

Social marketing is brand's key to success

LONG BEFORE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) or good corporate citizenship became a byword in big business, one company was already using it as a novel way to develop a brand.

It was along that groove that Procter & Gamble Philippines launched the country's first antibacterial soap with skin germ protection—Safeguard—in 1966, when all other toilet and bath soaps were being positioned in the market for their cosmetic benefits. Over the years it paired opportunity with responsibility by following a brand development strategy that promoted better health and hygiene for Filipinos.

This could be gleaned from Safeguard's TV commercials, popularized by lines as "konsensya" and "superior skin germ protection" and later by testimonials from the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (Pamet) in 1990. This then progressed into health and hygiene advocacy, with professional health experts and organizations supporting the brand.

Forty years down the road, Safeguard has become the best-selling soap in the country as it continues with this line of advertising and social marketing.

"We at Procter & Gamble, through Safeguard, have made the promotion of good hygiene habits among Filipinos a priority. Safeguard's vision is to help make a healthier nation. We have been single-minded in our educational message: Practicing proper hygiene habits, with soap that provides superior protection against germs, helps families stay healthy," said Johnip Cua, P&G president and general manager when the firm launched a nationwide educational road show to promote hygiene in 2002.

Recent studies show some 3.5 million children below five years old die annually from respiratory and diarrheal illnesses, and simple hand washing with soap can reduce the cases by half.

This revelation came from Dr. Valerie Curtis of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Dr. Anna Bowen of the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

Curtis and Bowen were among the speakers at the Safeguard-sponsored 2nd International Health and Hygiene Symposium, one of the activities marking the brand's 40 years in the Philippines.

As Bowen reported, most of the deaths occurred in the world's less developed regions. "However, when a very simple and inexpensive intervention, hand washing with soap, is introduced, studies have shown a reduction of up to 40-50 percent in diarrheal and respiratory illnesses," Bowen said. "This means that hand washing, as a very technically simple and low-cost health intervention, could improve the lives of millions of people around the world."

But teaching about proper hand washing is very difficult.

"Interventions designed to promote hand washing are often expensive, labor-intensive, and time-consuming," Bowen pointed out.

Safeguard developed plans to reach the grassroots and turn the good news into a good habit.

Safeguard partnered with Pamet in 1989, and with the United Nation's Children Emergency Fund (Unicef), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) to launch the Kalinisan, Kalusugan, Kaularan (KKK) in 1997. Making the KKK effort bigger, 1999 saw the inclusion of more partners—the Philippine Hospital Association, the Philippine Medical Association, and the National Confederation of Health Workers.

KKK aimed to reduce the incidence of diseases through practice of the Three Steps to Good Health (hand washing, bathing, and keeping the surroundings clean).

Safeguard partnered with the Unicef in the same year for a water sanitation project that provided 190 water supply systems and 500 toilet facilities for some 65,000 Filipinos.

To further equip the people even without water and wherever they could be, Safeguard introduced its hand sanitizer and deodorant products in 2000. In 2002, it rolled out a school program that educated four million children nationwide on the importance of frequent bathing and hand washing. In 2003, Safeguard and Unicef launched the Handog 2big Operation to provide water and sanitation facilities to 21 schools in 11 provinces.

Forty years and 10 variants later, Safeguard still promotes health and hygiene.

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Aveo 1.5 A/T	610,000	69,000	48,166	33,005	25,595	18,214	14,592	12,715	7,310
Optra 1.6 L M/T	650,000	89,000	49,946	34,225	26,541	18,888	15,131	13,185	7,790
Optra 1.6 L A/T	696,000	89,000	54,042	37,032	28,717	20,436	16,372	14,266	8,341
Optra 1.6 LS M/T	724,000	89,000	56,535	38,740	30,042	21,379	17,127	14,924	8,676
Optra 1.6 LS A/T	770,000	89,000	60,630	41,546	32,218	22,928	18,367	16,005	9,228

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RP wins gold at Asia Ad Awards

By Angel Guerrero
Contributor

JWT MANILA SCORED A RARE gold in the print category for their Greenpeace "Trees" ad at the Asia Pacific Advertising Festival held in the resort town of Pattaya in Thailand on March 9-11, 2006.

The winning ad competed against 1,396 print entries from ad agencies throughout the Asia Pacific region. Only five golds were awarded in print—two were won by BBDO Bangkok, one each by Creative Juice\G1 Bangkok, Saatchi & Saatchi Singapore and JWT Manila.

This is the Philippines best showing ever at the ad festival, now on its ninth year. Only two Philippine ad agencies—JWT and BBDO Guerrero Ortega scored medals at the regional show, dubbed as the "Cannes of Asia."

JWT also got two silvers, one in outdoor for the same Greenpeace poster, and one in film for the Consuelo Fondation/Unicef "Bunso" TV commercial by BBDO. BBDO won a bronze in print for the Childhope "Fire Place" print ad.

The Philippines' previous big haul was in 2002 when the McDonald's "Lolo" TV commercial by Leo Burnett won a gold and BBDO Guerrero Ortega's Visa "Dining Out" TV commercial took a bronze. Subsequent years saw a few bronzes for the country.

Shortlisted this year were Y&R's Palmer Asia Fire Distinguisher "Fire Truck" print ad, McCann-Erickson's Vaseline "Itchy Scalp" print ad, BBDO's Childhope Christmas Chalk Series print campaign, and the Lamy Pens "Lam-Ang" poster by BBDO.

David Ferrer, ECD of JWT and Joey Ong, senior art director at JWT Manila had the privilege of going up on stage twice for their Gold and Silver Lotus Crystal Ball awards.

Joey Ong said that the idea for the ad came to him after he got distressed when he saw cut logs floating while he was on a surfing trip in Siargao. Since he could not commit his time as a Greenpeace volunteer, he opted to do this campaign for them.

At the judges forum at the Adfest, the Greenpeace ad was one of the ads put up for discussion and was a popular choice by the jury.

The work was praised for its simplicity, and described as an "obvious idea just waiting to happen." David Guerrero, chairman and chief creative of BBDO Guerrero Ortega was chair of the print jury.

Matt Seddon, vice chairman of JWT Manila, flew in from Manila to support his team on awards night. Over 35 delegates from Manila's ad industry, the highest attendance ever at the festival, witnessed the event.

Thailand was the most awarded county with 65 awards, Singapore a distant second with 29 and Tokyo third with 25. Agency of the Year with most number of awards was BBDO Bangkok with 20 followed by Dentsu Tokyo with 18.

Young Lotus Awards was won by the team from Korea for their campaign to promote the Adfest. 13 young creative teams competed including Philippine representatives from Harrison Communications Jao Bautista and Dan Matutina.

The three-day event saw 183 awards from a record 4,738 entries submitted by 400 agencies in 34 cities. Over 1,400 delegates attended from junior creatives, regional creative directors, production houses, agency management and advertisers.

CREATIVE execs of JWT David Ferrer, and Joey Ong with their Gold and Silver Lotus Crystal Ball awards.

She'd rather...

From page B2-1

Quizzed by one of the judges if dealing with government is such a bad idea considering the bureaucracy and corruption, Roslyn says she replied: "But somebody's got to do it anyway."

Not like the "average student" who constantly tugs at daddy's purse strings for *baon*, Roslyn knows this early how to make one's own money and be at the mercy of bureaucracy. Like many young people who have chosen the path of the self-employed, she had suffered the long wait and the long walks back and forth government office buildings to set up a company she can call her own.

At 21, Roslyn single-handedly negotiated with a group of Singaporeans for the buyout of a million-peso sugarcane juice producer, later incorporated as Healthlifestyle Inc. Barely two months old, her company now leases machines and supplies sugarcane juice straight out of farms in Pampanga and Batangas to nine big restaurants.

"I am the company's entire value chain-from the farm, to delivery, to marketing and PR," Roslyn says. "I befriend all the waiters and provide marketing collateral support to my clients." And in between juggling work and school, she hones her marketing skills by attending workshops and joining competitions such as the Agora Youth Awards.

When Awards guest speaker Butch Jimenez, head of media and strategic communications of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., spoke of having a strong work ethic, Roslyn nodded in full agreement. "I am no stranger to hard work, having a dad who started his office and school supplies business when he was still a working student." She considers her father, Rosendo Chua, as her role model and "my financier," while mother Edilyn is her biggest fan.

Winning the plum title in the Agora Youth Awards "meant we are being recognized, not for the good things we did, but for our potential to do great," Roslyn says in her acceptance speech. At this point, she says she would prefer "getting customers than job offers" as she plans to focus on growing her start-up beverage company after graduation.

Roslyn now joins a long roster of winners since the Agora Youth Awards began in 1991. The awards, formerly called the Tomas-Tosma (Ten Outstanding Marketing Students and Three Outstanding Students Marketing Association), was inspired by the prestigious Agora Awards that select the best among marketing professionals and academes. To date, the Agora Youth Awards has already recognized over 100 outstanding marketing students nationwide.

Aside from Roslyn, other national winners were: Reynaldo P. Gabunada Jr. and Maria Kris Ann A. Llanes, both from Ateneo; Joseph Albert R. Buddahim from the University of the Philippines-Diliman; Ysabella P. Cainglet and Michelle V. Grejaldo from the University of the Philippines-Visayas; and AR B. Polinar from New Era University. National finalists were: Jocno V. Nabor from Central Luzon State University, Stephen V. Fajardo from Mindanao State University-IIT, Vivien Betsy B. Fuentebella from Southville Foreign Colleges, and Nathaniel K. Sy from Chiang Kai Shek College.

Recognized as having the best student marketing organizations were: the Ateneo de Manila University, UP-Diliman, San Beda College, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, and the Marketing Society Inc. of UP Visayas.

This year's judges were: Emerico de Guzman, president of Personnel Management Association of the Philippines; Tomas Banguis, president of the Philippine Marketing Association; Donald Lim, president and CEO of Yehey.com; Jade Tulio, vice president for marketing of HBC; Wennifer Chan, VP for marketing of Nestle Ice Cream; and Cindy Banaria, assistant vice president for sales of Nestle Ice Cream. National winners received cash prizes and trophies.

TransCo
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Republic of the Philippines

Section I. Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply and Delivery of Various Information and Communication Technology Equipment (Reference No.: PB051006-EL0098 (PB2)

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the *CY 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board* intends to apply the sum of ***Php 3,053,000.00*** being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Various Information and Communication Technology Equipment.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders *for Various ICTs*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A.138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders, starting **March 9, 2006 to April 17, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of ***One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).*** The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **March 28, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.** at the same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 P.m. of April 18, 2006**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	1% of ABC
2. Bank guarantee	1.5% of ABC
3. Surety bond	2.5% of ABC
4. Foreign government guarantee	100% of ABC

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on **April 18, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.** at the *Admin Conference Room, same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812235 / Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 10 & 17, 2006)

DCI INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DBP Data Center, Inc. (DCI) is inviting interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of Information Technology Equipment and Services :

Lot	Description	Budget, 12 % VAT inclusive
A	Supply of 6 EDGE switches and 2 CORE switches and software with installation and customization services	Php 1,800,000.00
B	Supply and Installation of Structured Cabling (406 nodes)	Php 1,500,000.00

Schedule of Activities:

Issuance of Eligibility Requirements	March 13 to 20, 2006
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	March 24, 2006 at 2:00 pm
Issuance of Bid Documents to Eligible Suppliers	March 28, 2006
Pre-Bidding Conference	March 30, 2006 at 2:00 pm
Deadline for Submission of Questions	March 31, 2006 at 5:00 pm
Response to Submitted Questions	April 4, 2006 at 5:00 pm
Submission and Opening of Technical and Financial Proposals at 2:00 pm of date specified	For Lot A on April 12, 2006 For Lot B on April 18, 2006
Issuance of Notice of Award	For Lot A on April 19, 2006 For Lot B on April 28, 2006

Application for eligibility check is open to suppliers registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission/Department of Trade and Industry and have been engaged in the Supply, Delivery and Installation of Information Technology Equipment for at least three (3) years and must be at least 60% Filipino owned (for partnership and corporations).

Interested suppliers may secure the Eligibility Requirement Form from the BAC Secretariat c/o Ms. Rosalyn Tañagras (Phone 848-0277) at the 22nd floor, Pacific Star Building, Senator Gil Puyat Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A).

The DBP Data Center, Inc. reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to this Government-owned and Controlled Corporation.

(PDI–March 10 & 17, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ALABANG – STO. TOMAS DEVELOPMENT INC.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Alabang – Sto. Tomas Development Inc. (ASDI), through the Philippine Infrastructure Corporation (PIC) – Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) per Republic Act No. 9184, invites local and/or foreign consultants to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted, to bid for the project hereunder.

Name of Project	Consultancy Services for the **Preparation of Detailed Engineering Design** for the Daang Hari – SLEX Link Road Project
Brief Description	The Daang Hari – SLEX Link Road Project is a proposed toll road, with an approximate length of 3.68 km., that would link the existing Daang Hari in Bacoor, Cavite and the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) near the Susana Heights Interchange The Detailed Engineering Design for the Project shall include, but not be limited to, the following: validation of initial survey works and preliminary design, preparation of cost estimates and generation of construction drawings, preparation of technical reports and tender documents for the EPC contract. The consultancy team shall include, but not be limited to, the following: **Key Staff**: Project Manager/Team Leader, Highway Engineer, Toll Collection System & Toll Operations Specialist, Correction/Prison Facility Design Specialist, **Other Key Staff**: Bridge/Structural Engineers, Hydrologist/Drainage Engineer, Geotechnical Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Traffic Engineer, Geologist/Seismic Expert, IT Specialist, Materials/Pavement Engineer, Geodetic Engineer, Contracts Engineer/Document Specialist, Cost Engineer and Specifications Engineer. **To be eligible to participate in this bidding, the Consultant must have experience in the preparation of Detailed Engineering Design for a Toll Road Project.**
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	PHP16,000,000.00 Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected.
Source of Funding	Alabang – Sto. Tomas Development, Inc. Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	90 calendar days

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Pre-qualification Information and Consultant's Eligibility Forms. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant(s), qualification of personnel who may be assigned for consulting services and job capacity. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE). The technical and financial proposals shall be given corresponding weights with the technical proposals given a weight of 90% and financial proposals given a weight of **10%**. Their total weighted percentage shall be equal to 100%. The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply.

The Pre-qualification Information and Consultant's Eligibility Forms will be available at the PIC Office, 7/F Adamson Centre, L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines. Tel. Nos.: 812-3023, 812-3810 and Fax No.: 892-6143 upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php2,000 to the Philippine Infrastructure Corporation. Deadline for submission of the letter of intent and eligibility documents shall be on **March 22, 2006, 12:00 noon**. Late submission will not be entertained.

Bid Documents will be available only to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php20,000 to the Philippine Infrastructure Corporation

The ASDI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or any formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any consultant/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to the ASDI and the Government. Furthermore, the ASDI assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ANGELITO G. RAMOS
PIC-SBAC Chairman

(PDI–March 10 & 17, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL FOR WELFARE OF CHILDREN

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Council for the Welfare of Children invites registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

Item/Description	Approved Budget for the	Pre-Bid Conference Contract	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents *(non-refundable)*
1. PABX Installation	Php 150,000.00	March 24, 2006 (9:00 a.m.)	April 12, 2006 (8:30 a.m.)	Php 200.00
2. Supply and Delivery IT Equipment	Php 2,000,000.00	March 24, 2006 (2:00 p.m.)	April 12, 2006 (2:00 p.m.)	Php 1,000.00
3. Consultancy for WEB Development with Content Mgt. System	Php 150,000.00	March 24, 2006 (9:00 a.m.)	April 12, 2006 (10:00 a.m.)	Php 200.00

2. The Bid Documents shall be available at the Council for the Welfare of Children-Bids and Awards Committee (CWC-BC) Secretariat starting March 17, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the IRR-Part A of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and the citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183.
4. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), at No.10 Apo street, Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City at 10:00 a.m. of March 27, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount stated in the tender document in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) reserves the right to accept, reject any Bid or to annul the bidding process, at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability the affected Bidder or Bidders.
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, CWC Building No. 10 Apo Street, Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City at Tel. Nos. 740-8864/711-1141 or visit (www@cwc.gov.ph)

MA. ELENA S. CARABALLO, CESO III
Deputy Executive Director and
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

CWC Bldg., No. 10 Apo St., Sta. Mesa Heights, 1114 Quezon City
P.O. Box No. 2363, Q.C. Central Post Office
Tel. Nos. 743-8375, 740-8864; Telefax Nos. 743-8374, 740-8863, 781-1039
E-mail: cwc@info.com.ph • website: www.cwc.gov.ph

(PDI – March 17, 2006)

‘Does customer …

From page B2-4

er measures. For example, in the “conative loyalty” measure, a customer would not “commit to keep on buying” your service if that customer is not satisfied. Similarly, your service would not gain the third loyalty indicator in the first set of loyalty metrics (being recommended to friends and associates) if there's no customer satisfaction.

Loyalty started with disloyalty

Consumer behavior research has shown that there's truth in the common observation that customers are more often disloyal than they are loyal. In his seminar on customer satisfaction and loyalty, the senior MRx-er likes saying: “If you think about it, you'll realize that all loyalty behavior started with disloyalty. When you made the promise to be loyal to someone new—that started by your being disloyal to someone else. So you must find that special reason for initiating loyalty and for sustaining it from that someone new.” That's the essence of positioning and repositioning.

Those persuaded that disloyalty behavior is the more common reality than loyalty behavior speak much more of disloyalty prevention. In a 1995 Harvard Business Review article, Reichheld and Sasser referred to this as the strategy of “Zero Defection.” Early detection is key in gaining zero defection.

Detecting customer defection is as simple as monitoring customer purchase trends. If you have an updated and current customer database, this can be made at an individual customer basis. That renders your monitoring powerful.

After detecting defection, what do you do? You have to get into customer recovery and maintenance. That's customer relationship marketing (CRM). And in CRM, it's about having better quality customers and not just having more customers. So you must ask: “Are the customers I've lost worth keeping in the first place? Or are they those you wouldn't mind losing?”

In most such companies, you are certain to have a good number of unprofitable customers—those where your earnings are not even enough to contribute to recovering your variable costs. In effect you are subsidizing them.

The worst case of course is what has come to be known as “toxic customers”—those who keep on violating in the most flagrant manner, accepted industry “rules” as in the case of bank customers who habitually issue bouncing checks, or those whom you can't seem to do anything good or enough. Banks should terminate accounts of these.

“Does customer satisfaction always translate to customer loyalty?” We say: “Not always. But you can't do without customer satisfaction.” To gain customer loyalty, our diagnosis is: “Pay attention to the forces that influence: (1) your customers' continuing patronage of your service over the long term, (2) their purchase/use of your service on a repeated and an exclusive or preferential basis, (3) their recommending on their own initiative your service to friends and associates, (4) their preferring your service over others because of its superior qualities, (5) their liking your service over others because it has never failed to satisfy them, (6) their committing to keep on buying your service, and (7) their getting into the habit of sticking to your service.

Send questions to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net or text at 0919-314-5412. God bless!

Know the market and know it well

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

RP gets more Korean, Japanese tourists

KNOWING THE MARKET AND knowing it well spelled the difference in the Tourism department's campaign to entice more moneyed tourists to see the sights in the Philippines.

DOT figures showed that tourist arrivals have been on the decline since 1997, hitting a low of 1.8 million in 2001. A number of hotels closed down and investments in the tourism sector dried up.

But following Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano's policy to focus efforts and resources on Korea, China and Japan, which account for almost 70 percent of total arrivals, the trend has been reversed.

Arrivals jumped 20.1 percent from 1.9 million to 2.3 million in 2004, and up another 13.5 percent last year to 2.6 million, and there are no signs of a slowdown during the first two months of the year.

Durano told the INQUIRER during a recent discussion with the paper's business section that the DOT was able to post improving numbers because the DOT now knows the markets better following extensive research done in Korea, China and Japan.

The consumer insights allowed the DOT to build on existing strategies that worked, throw out those that failed to deliver the goods, and develop new, more cost effective campaigns.

Research in Korea, for instance, showed that Koreans were attracted to the diversity of the islands, that one island offers something different than another.

The DOT capitalized on that impression and came up with an advertising campaign around the line “Philippines: More than you can imagine.”

Korea is the biggest source of tourists in the Philippines, hitting 500,000 last year, and the numbers have been growing steadily over the past five years.

フィリピンは
カラダにいい。

“7,107の”
プレミアム・リゾート・アイランド

In China, on the other hand, the DOT continues to use the Wealth of Wonders (WOW) tagline as it enjoys good recall in the mainland.

China arrivals have grown more than 2.5 times from 39,000 in 2004 to over 110,000 in 2005, and more Chinese are expected to travel as their incomes increase following massive investments in the country.

In Japan, which has long been the biggest source of tourists until it was overtaken by Korea last year, the DOT built the campaign around the beach destinations, such as Boracay, Cebu and Bohol.

This is based on research that said the beaches were what the Japanese loved best about the Philippines.

Data also showed that the Philippines appealed to the young, adventurous Japanese, especially women who have their own money to spend for travel.

Durano said there was a time when the DOT took a very general approach to marketing campaigns.

Posters, flyers and even television and print advertisements were written in English, which the target markets did not respond as well to, and the messages did not differentiate the Philippines from the other tourist destinations.

The DOT, thus, decided to not be everywhere and to focus on Korea, Japan and China, which are the biggest sources of tourists in the world.

The DOT contracted local advertising and public relations firms to write Philippine material in the local languages, even going as far as getting popular artists to endorse the Philippines.

In Japan, the DOT signed up fashion icon Anne Watanabe, daughter of actor Ken Watanabe, to be the campaign spokesperson and Ambassador of Goodwill for the Premium Resort Islands campaign.

This is to target Japanese women in their 20s to 50s with extensive travel experience and looking for a beach just a few hours away.

Durano said the Philippines is in a unique position to attract this market as the country is the closest tropical destination to Japan, and also China and Korea.

It was not only the marketing campaigns that were reorganized since 2004, so was the bureaucracy.

The DOT set up teams to handle Japan, China and Korea whose job it is to implement the programs to get the tourists to the country.

Durano said that by having specific teams handling single markets, the programs would be more focused and coordination across departments would be easier.

Team Japan headed by Rosario Virginia C. Gaetos of the Philippine Conventions and Visitors Corp., for instance, is putting a new spin to the Premium Resort Islands Campaign called “The Philippines: Wellness from the Inside Out.”

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the:

1. CONCRETE POLES
2. CONDUCTORS

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarence E. Jacinto)
   - a. Company Profile
   - b. Business Registration
   - c. Business Permit
   - d. BIR/VAT Certificate
   - e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   - f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years if applicable
2. Must be able to pay P2,000.00 (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accepts proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline for submission of requirements-March 24, 2006.

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

Source of Fund: PDAF
(PDI – March 10 & 17, 2006)

FREEPORT SERVICE CORPORATION
of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

All parties interested to bid for the project described below are invited to submit Application for Eligibility and to Bid with Freeport Service Corporation, Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Only eligible contractors are invited to participate in the forthcoming bidding.

A. Name of Project: CONSTRUCTION OF FREEPORT OIL-CBD
Location: Rizal Hi-way Corner Sta. Rita Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone

B. Project Description/Scope of Works:

This project is a ***design and build scheme*** wherein qualified bidders shall submit their detailed engineering designs. Scope of work includes construction of pedestal independent canopy, independent canopy with cashier's booth, gas station office, locker and storage room / generator set area, e-cycle office/show room, excavation for two (2) underground tanks, concrete driveway with air/water station area and foundation for monolith. Other related items include plumbing, painting, mechanical and electrical works

C. Approved Budget Cost ***Php 5M***

D. Requirement:
   - a. PCAB Registration and Classification License
   - b. SBMA Accreditation Certificate

E. Cost of Documents/Forms for Pre-Qualification/Eligibility and to Bid Php 2,000.00
Issuance Date : 20 March 2006

Application for eligibility and to Bid is open to all contractors with valid PCAB (Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board) Contractors License and Registration. Prospective bidders are required to submit a letter of intent and certified true copy of the Contractors License upon purchase of the forms for Application for Eligibility and to Bid and shall bring the original copy of the Contractors PCAB License Classification Registration for verification and authentication purposes.

F. Deadline for submission of accomplished Pre-qualification/Eligibility Requirements: 22 March 2006, 5:00 P.M.

Addressed to : RODOLFO C. DE VERA
BAC Chairman, MCSD Manager
Freeport Service Corporation
Bldg. H8211, Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Project : Construction of Freeport Oil-CBD

G. Time and date of Pre-Bid Conference, Site Inspection and Submission/ Opening of Bids will be confirmed by the issuance of Notice to Eligible prospective bidders.

All particulars relative to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids and awards of contract shall be governed by the provision of Republic Act 9184 Implementing Rules and Regulation known as the Government Procurement Act.

H. The FSC reserves the right to reject any and all offers, to waive any informality, and to annul this procurement process and reject all offers anytime prior to the award of the contract, without thereby, incurring any liability to the affected offer(s) or any obligation to inform the affected offer(s) of the ground for FSC's action and to accept such offers as may be considered advantageous to the Freeport Services Corporation.

(Sgd.) RODOLFO C. DE VERA
Chairperson

For Inquiries please call:
GLENDA E. CAJULIS
BAC Secretariat
Tel. No. (047) 252-2313
Telefax No. (047) 252-2317
(PDI – March 11 & 17, 2006)

Filipinos, saving more for the future

By Joel V. Nigos

INFLATION, OIL PRICE HIKE, EVAT. Amidst the higher cost of living nowadays, Filipinos have become financially wiser and more conscious and cautious of their everyday expenditures. Recent studies show that two out of three Filipinos have given priority to saving. Whether it is in the form of getting the biggest bargain, cutting on expenses or building on their savings, Filipinos are adjusting and adopting a new lifestyle of saving.

These are some of the things Juliet Villamor and her husband had considered when they recently purchased a pension plan as a means of saving for future needs. “Napakalaking tulong ng pre-need sa amin (Pre-need has been a great help to us),” Juliet enthuses. Several years earlier, they bought an education plan for their child and after seeing the benefits it has brought them, decided to buy a pension plan for a secured retirement.

Treasure every moment

Just like the Villamors, securing your and your loved ones' future should be done by planning ahead. “Dapat talaga maghanda hangga't maaga (It's a must to prepare)” advises Juliet. “Hindi kasi natin alam kung ano ang mangyayari bukas (we can never know what will happen in the future).”

The secret to financial security is simple – plan ahead. There's no better time to plan for your future, but now. The realization of your dreams for the future lies on two things - your current lifestyle and sound financial management. Wise savings means having money to be used for current needs and allocating a percentage of your income for future financial needs like your children's education, healthcare and retirement. **Take a quiz to assess how much financial security you will need in the future.**

Save up for retirement

Retirement is one life stage often neglected but must be given great attention. With all the medical advancement and pursuit for a healthier lifestyle, man's life expectancy has increased; yet, his financial planning for these added years has been left behind.

We create a budget for our wedding, program our income when the kids start schooling, even create a weekly budget calendar for all household expenses, but we never look at how life is going to be after the steady income from a regular job stops coming at 65 years of age. Because there is life after our work years, having a solid retirement plan ensures a fulfilled and worry-free life for you and your family in the future.

Aid to financial planning

Over the years one company has stood out in providing comprehensive and innovative pension products to the Filipino market, Philam Plans. Philam Plans is the country's most trusted pre-need company and has been the undisputed pension provider in the past 6 years.

Its Future Fund line of pension products allows you to enjoy maximum flexibility with your choice of payment terms and maturity period that suit your financial needs. For short-term needs, you may even get cash benefits earlier than the maturity date. Your fully paid plan may also be used as collateral to secure a loan via its partner banks, providing you the liquidity you so desire. The Pangarap Pension Plan, on the other hand, is an affordable pension plan that provides your basic pension requirements. With just a small amount, you can already start saving up for your future.

Aside from pension products, Philam Plans offers other savings plans that address education, healthcare and inheritance, all of which can provide a better future for the Filipino family.

Philam Plans helps secure one's healthcare needs with Philam Protect, a medical care plan made possible by the partnership of Philamlife and PhilamCare. While regular HMOs cover one's medical expenses until the age of 60, Philam Protect provides funds and medical assistance beyond those years. It is there to cover for medical spending during the time when people need medical care the most. This product also includes features that maintain one's good health condition through unlimited consultation and annual check ups in PhilamCare clinics. Allowances are also provided for hospitalization and reimbursement for surgical procedures.

A new pre-need product in the market, the Philam Inheritage Fund helps the planholder build up his inheritance for his family to ensure that the good life he has given them will be sustained even after he's gone. With a comprehensive list of insurance features added to living benefits, funds can also be used to settle estate and property taxes. Built into the Inheritage Fund is the professional administration of the planholder's memorial service as conducted by the company's Family Assistance Officers.

Philam Plans' Life plans see to it that the family's needs are well taken care of even after their loved one has gone. More than just providing the service and funds for the memorial rites, the planholder and his family also benefits from the insurance features of the product. Both the Serenity and Parangal Life Plan give the family of the departed the privilege to choose the mortuary nearest and most convenient to them for the rendition of memorial services.

A Guide to Retirement
Why you should get ready for it right now!

Imagine your hair starts to turn gray, you stop counting your age and start counting your grand children. Your company surprised you with a grand retirement party, and then you just wake up the next day with a completely different lifestyle.

Fill up this simple test and find out what to expect in life after retirement. Below are just a few things you'll need or do when you graduate from employment and settle into retirement:

Financial Needs	Estimated cost per month
Recreation Retirement is a time to enjoy the fruits of your labor, some engage in golf, others take up a new passion like baking. Whatever it may be, you'll need something to occupy your spare time and make your retirement years productive.	P ____.00
Nourishment (Food) Gone are the days when our body and health can afford fast food orders. By retirement, we need to take in more nutritious meals that are sometimes a little more on the expensive side. At times, food supplements are even prescribed to remedy or prevent any illness on the horizon.	P ____.00
Annual Check-ups Regardless of age, this is something you shouldn't miss! Make time and set aside money for annual physical check-ups	P ____.00
Medicines Maintenance for your high blood pressure or diabetes are a must and must never be out of your budget list.	P ____.00
Utilities Bills on electricity, water, phone and cable will never go away with retirement!	P ____.00
Gas Money/ Transportation Hmmm, how much would that cost by then?	P ____.00
Entertainment A trip to the movie house or a new book... it's about time to give yourself the time to relax and do the things you've always loved	P ____.00
Emergency Funds Make sure you've set a certain amount for emergency purposes!	P ____.00
Dream Vacation After years of hard work and loyal service to your company, it's about time to treat yourself with that dream vacation you promised yourself and your loved ones	P ____.00
Others	P ____.00
Total Expected Retirement Cost per month:	P ____.00
	X 12
TOTAL cost per year	P ____.00

This simple test is not to alarm you but to give you a better perspective on what is to come and how you can enjoy your retirement life by planning for it right now.

Committed to serve

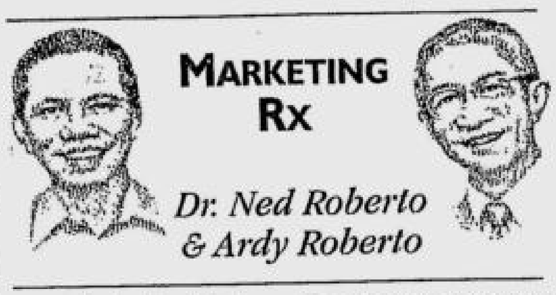
Philam Plans has made savings much easier through its call center, where anyone can get free financial planning and product information just by dialing 5285-200. Philam Plans sales counselors are all well trained to match your future financial needs with the perfect pre-need product. Whether in good times or in tough times, Philam Plans has never wavered in its commitment to its planholders in the last 16 years. It has kept its promise by fulfilling its mission of saving dreams, memories and children's future. (Check out www.ephilam.com.ph for information on Philam Plans and its products)

It now has over 700,000 planholders comprising more than one-third of the total pre-need market. It has also the largest and most liquid trust fund level among pre-need companies, enough to cover the P600 million projected maturing benefits in 2006 and the rest of its planholder obligations until 2013.

A subsidiary of the country's leading insurance company and the most trusted name in life insurance, Philamlife, Philam Plans has consistently topped market surveys emerging as the No.1 pre-need company in the last four years. It is also a part of the US-based American International Group (AIG), the world's leading insurance and financial services organization. – *With Grace Del Rosario*

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

'Does customer satisfaction always translate into loyalty?'



MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: OUR COMPANY IS A SERVICE COMpany. We've been preparing to go after the Baldrige Quality Award. For the past three years we've had an annual customer satisfaction survey as part of the requirements for the Award. We have also put in place last year a customer loyalty program. In our last Board meeting, a new director asked about the relationship between the two. His specific question was: "Shouldn't there be a link between those two? Does high customer satisfaction always translate to customer loyalty?" There was a good deal of exchange of opinions but no one could cite what our new director was looking for: "research-based answers." Or at least what he called "a strong theoretically founded argument." Do you have data on this?

A: It sounds like you have for your new Board member a research-minded director. He's probably also a professor or former professor schooled in the theoretical basis of customer behavior. We believe that's generally good. We once quoted in this column the famous Kurt Lewin as saying: "Nothing is more practical than a good theory." This challenges our wrong but popular belief that: "What's good in theory is most of the time not good in practice."

Let's start with customer satisfaction. What we now know about customer satisfaction is that it's relative to customer expectation. If your product or service meets customer expectation, then there's customer satisfaction. If it exceeds customer expectation, then there's customer delight. If you go beyond customer delight, then you surprise the customer.

You mentioned that you're in service marketing. We don't mind repeating what we've explained in a previous column—a satisfactory service derives from three basic sources: A satisfactory service staff, a satisfactory service venue or outlet, and a satisfactory service processing. The authority on service marketing, Chris Lovelock, had researched on these sources and pointed out that they are "multiplicatively" related. That means that if there's dissatisfaction in one, then there'll be customer dissatisfaction in all. This seems to be the rule among American customers. However, our experience in the Philippines says that this is not necessarily true among Filipino customers. The relationship is mostly additive. This means that dissatisfaction in one factor comes out to still overall satisfaction if there's satisfaction in the other two.

In terms of customer disposition, the "multiplicative" relationship refers to an "unforgiving" customer. An additive disposition defines a "forgiving" customer. When exactly are Filipino customers additive or forgiving?

So far, our research shows that when your service people are courteous and friendly (that is, scoring high in satisfaction), customers won't mind that much if you score average or even below average in service venue and processing. A satisfactory service staff will make up more than enough for your low score in the other two factors. This is particularly true with Class C and DE customers. Where they can be unforgiving is expectedly also in a disappointing service staff. So invest in training good and quality service personnel.

The Filipino equivalent of the unforgiving American customer is the upscale customer. A zero score in any one of the three forces of service satisfaction results in a zero total score. It's a "multiplicative" unforgiving attitude as a rule. There are of course exceptions but very few.

What about customer loyalty? How is satisfaction related to loyalty?

No satisfaction = no loyalty

What we are beginning to understand is that there can be no loyalty if there's no satisfaction. No customer can be loyal to something that has disappointed or is disappointing that customer. However, satisfaction is no guarantee for customer loyalty. Customer loyalty then is more complicated than customer satisfaction.

This complicated character is reflected in the available metrics for loyalty. In his survey research studies, the senior MRx-er uses two sets of loyalty measurements.

The first set is based on the most popular concept of customer loyalty as a behavior. Not surprisingly Lovelock (in his 2001 Services Marketing book) calls this "behavioral loyalty." There are three indicators of behavioral loyalty: Customers' continuing patronage of your service over the long term, their purchase and use of your service on a repeated and an exclusive or preferential basis, and their recommending on their own initiative your service to friends and associates. Your service's unweighted or weighted total score on these indicators tells you the extent of customer behavioral loyalty. If you decide to use weights, they should correspond to your priority ranking of the three indicators and sum up to 1 if you're using fractions as weight measures or 100 percent if you're into percentages for the weight measures.

The second set of loyalty measurements comes from R. Oliver's 1999 Journal of Marketing article "Whence Consumer Loyalty." The set consists of four agree-disagree statements as follows:

1. A "cognitive loyalty" statement that says: "I prefer this service over others because of its superior qualities over others."
2. An "affective loyalty" statement that says: "I like this service over others because it has never failed to satisfy me."
3. A "conative loyalty" statement that says: "I have committed to keep on buying this same service."
4. An "action loyalty" statement that says: "I've gotten into the habit of sticking to this service and just keep on buying it."

Your service's unweighted or weighted score on these four scales determine the extent of your customer loyalty. Refer to the weight measures in the first set of loyalty measurements if you decide to use weights here.

Notice how there is only one direct reference to customer satisfaction in these two sets of customer loyalty metrics. That's in the "affective loyalty" measurement. Of course, customer satisfaction is supposedly contained by all the oth-

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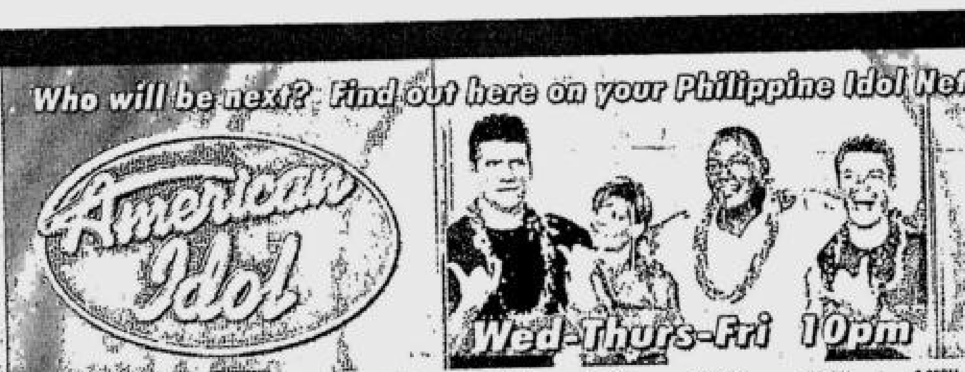

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Friday, March 17, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		PBA	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol Gudtaym		Rail Stories	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy				TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Princess Lulu	Pinoy Big Brother					Insider
AXN		The Contender				Worlds Apart		Cold Squad		Amazon		Gamemax (Season II)	E Buzz	The 6th Day					13 Ghosts
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Badjao				Lagalag: The Eddie Fernandez Story				Lastikman				Tapang Sa Tapang				Spirit Warriors 2: The Shortcut	
Cinemax		The Hanging Tree			A Slight Case Of Murder				First Target (6:25 PM)			Premonition			Triggermen			Out For Justice (11:05PM)	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		Surface		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Hollywood Justice	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Criminal Content		Crossing Jordan			
Discovery Channel		Extreme Engineering		Rivals		Beyond Tomorrow		More Than Human		Rides		American Chopper		Beyond Tomorrow		Mostly True Stories		Crime Night	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Brandy & Mr. Whiskers		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	Asian Tour TCL Classic Day 2						Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia	Pool/ Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Sportscenter Asia	Motorsport Asia	Classic Boxing		Classic Boxing: J. Johnson-Lalor Years		Pro Billiards '05 Stars Billiards Championships		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Project Runway		Change of Heart	Eliminidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Joan Of Arcadia		American Dreams 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	The Word Was Made Flesh	Angelus (3:15 PM)	The Donut Man	Angel Force	Suffering And The Love Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Stations Of The Cross	EWTN Gallery	Super Saints	Life on The Rock Encore		Marriage Works In Christ	Defending Life	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Holy Spirit In The Church	Father Corapi And The Catechism Of The Catholic Church	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bubble Gang			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Judging Amy		McBride: The Chameleon Murder			Ladies Man	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Midsomer Murders: Destroying Angel			Doc Martin (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine (11:25PM)
HBO			Caddyshack (3:45PM)				She's Out Of Control			New Jack City (7:15 PM)				Addicted To Love			New On The Big Screen In March	Cat In The Hat (11:15PM)	
Hero TV	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gatekeepers	The Wanderers	Combattler V	Gundam Seed	Iron Man 28	Naruto	Mama do Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gundam Seed	Iron Man 28
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		Japan Video Topics		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Primetime Glick	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box				Megas XLR	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Always Sunny In Philadelphia	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Reno 911	Insomniac W/ Dave Attell
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Ming's Quest	Intimate Portrait		Behind The Velvet Ropes	Life & Style		Guess Who's Coming To Decorate		Iron Chef America	
MTV Philippines	MTV Hits	Handpicked: Lee Ryan	MTV Hits		Trippin	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Special	MTV Hits			Get Hitch'd	Get Spotted	Diyes		Screwing Urbandub	Trippin	Making the Movie V for Vendetta	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	Top 5	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Club MYX	MYX Versions	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Explorations Powered By Duracell	Rough Trades	Nat'l Geographic Amazing Moments						Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week		Explorations Powered By Duracell Auto Focus	Rough Trades	Animal Cannibals	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	GSIS Member's Hour		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Teledyaryo						Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	Rocket Power	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO	Papunta Ka Pa Lang, Pabalik Na Ako				Pangarap Lang Ang Pag-ibig				Pagdating Ng Panahon				[illegible] Sa Dibdib				Lupe		
Qtv	Iisa Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zentrix	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mara	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	Ganda Ng Lola Ko		News On Q	Love Life		Irene	Romance
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Krusada Kontra Krimen		Global Window	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		World Poker		The Ultimate Fighter		Newswatch Now	TV Greats On Friday		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		SBN Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports		Davis Cup 2006 Day 2 Match 1							GWS 10-2006	Sagupaan	NBA Jam	NBA Game: Celtics @ Heat	BD Russia	FIFA Preview Series 5	Xstatic Xtreme Ep. 05	Inside the PGA	Sportsdesk	Philippine Open Finals	
Sports Plus				ACC Basketball: Maryland @ North Carolina				World Game		UAW Daimler Chrysler Highlights		Nopi Tunervision 3					Golf Today	Bay Hill Invitational Day1	
Star Movies			One Fine Day (3:20 PM)			Spanglish (5:10 PM)				Mrs. Doubtfire (6:55 PM)				The One			Dangerous Waters: Shark Attack		
Star World	8 Simple Rules	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		American Idol		Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol		TNA Wrestling		NYPD Blue		Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23	Bewitched	Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond	Teen Titans	The Batman	Justice League Unlimited	Wazzup Wazzup		Survivor Guatemala		Barkada Nights		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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Introducing
a new
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Forever-pink nipples?

Thelma Sioson San Juan

YES, BEAUTY IS GOING FROM WHITE TO pink. Make that white—and pink.

You don't have to be in the beauty or fashion industry to know that whitening isn't just a trend. Whitening products—from sunblocks to foundation to night cream—constitute a lucrative segment of the skincare and cosmetics industry worldwide, starting with Asia. It's still growing.

It's a boom area that caught beauty and skincare industries by surprise, particularly because the beauty executives in the West underestimated the Asian women's obsession with "whiteness." (For the record, it's an obsession we don't necessarily buy because there's nothing like the sultry morena—an attribute that landed the likes of our **Anna Bayle** an enviable niche in the world.)

The other day, dropping by a top hair salon chain, I just realized that another trend is emerging: women are going pink. Now, women want their whitened complexion to have that blush, that pinkish glow. What's new is that they're applying the pinkish color cream not just to their cheeks but also to their lips and nipples. Forever-pink nipples should be a perfect marketing pitch.

The principle is not new—it's revitalizing skin cells, enhancing their metabolism, to create that fresh, youthful glow. Women have been using this skincare technological breakthrough to "whiten" their underarm, knees, heels, elbows. Now add the lips and nipples.

Men's reaction to this can be amusing, or cluelessness. Some male executives I once overheard talking have this notion that such whitening products actually turn your skin paper-white, or can turn a *morena* to *mestiza*. Any whitening product that claims that is, in fact, bad for your skin because it destroys it. A whitening product clarifies your skin, evens it so that sun spots and other blemishes "disappear," and allows the skin's natural glow to come out.

The inclusion of such whitening products among the lines of beauty and skincare global giants like Ponds, for instance, brought whitening into the consciousness of the mainstream market.

Now women will not stop there. They want that pinkish glow as well. This much I concluded when I saw women snapping up the Miracle Pink Skin Color Restoring Cream at Ricky Reyes' Salon last week. The Miracle Pink, says its package, can "inhibit and terminate the melanin formation, speed up the regeneration of skin cells..." Its ingredients include deionized water, grape-seed extract, ascorbic acid. I presume it contains plant and herbal extracts. You can scrutinize its label yourself if you want to feel safe. I haven't tried it but I heard it lasts for some time.

Anyway, on top of this, I believe summer is going pink, from skincare cream to cosmetics. I discovered Shu Uemura Water Blusher and since then, can't do without it. It's a stick you dab on your cheeks, it feels cool, almost refreshing on your cheeks, and leaves your cheeks with a pinkish glow. It creates a natural pinch on your cheeks. That and a translucent pink lip gloss should give you that barely there makeup for summer.

From forever-pink nipples to a natural pinch on the cheeks, women indeed have the edge—and the armory.

Two Vs

If you ask which look and designer won in the Oscars, I'd say it's the two V's—vintage and Versace. That is, if you don't count **Nicole Kidman**'s Balenciaga. Nicole seems unbeatable on the red carpet. She not only picks the right designer, she also knows how to pull it off—something, to my mind, **Charleze Theron** wasn't able to do in her Galiano. Nicole is an Oscars classic.

However, obviously it was fresh-from-rehab **Donatella Versace** who burned the midnight oil just to snag as many stars to wear her gowns. It is said that she herself did the last-minute fittings. Her harvest was awesome: **Uma Thurman, Hilary Swank, Salma Hayek, Jessica Alba**, and, in the Vanity Fair party, **Madonna, Lindsay Lohan**, among others.

Of course, vintage was on winner **Reese Whitherspoon** (in a 1955 Dior) and on **J.Lo.**

Ford and nudes

Speaking of Vanity Fair, the March cover of Tom Ford with a nude **Keira Knightley** and an equally nude **Scarlett Johansson** is enjoying the buzz. The idea of Ford working as guest editor to present Vanity Fair's Hollywood issue is a sheer creative and marketing genius. It's also a casting coup. What's interesting, however, is the insider report of WWD that Vanity Fair tested two covers: one showing Ford and Keira and Scarlett, the other showing Keira and Scarlett alone. They did the cover testing with focus groups, and the result? More voted for having Ford on the cover, thus the March cover.

That's how durable a brand Ford is.

> In this era of whitening, women want a different blush, from face to toe

Crispy and worthy

Only one occasion, where I am concerned, was worth chomping away at crispy *pata* for, thus committing cholesterol sin: the party given by his staff for Unilever's **Francis Flores**. It was a most enjoyable private evening at Luce recently when Ponds' **Orange Aberin, Dondi Gomez, Noel** and **Gina Lorenzana** sprang an almost-surprise party for Francis. Friends like **Albert Almendralejo, Tim Yap** and **Robbie Carmona** were also there. Francis is not leaving Unilever but just moving up from Ponds, where he had a most enjoyable and successful stint, to be the regional marketing manager for Axe in Asia, another Unilever brand. That's an exhilarating move up (literally it's only a one-floor move down in the Unilever office in Manila). In his new challenging post, Francis is making the rounds of Asia. To think he's not even 30.

E-mail the author at Thelma_SSanJuan@abs.pinoycentral.com

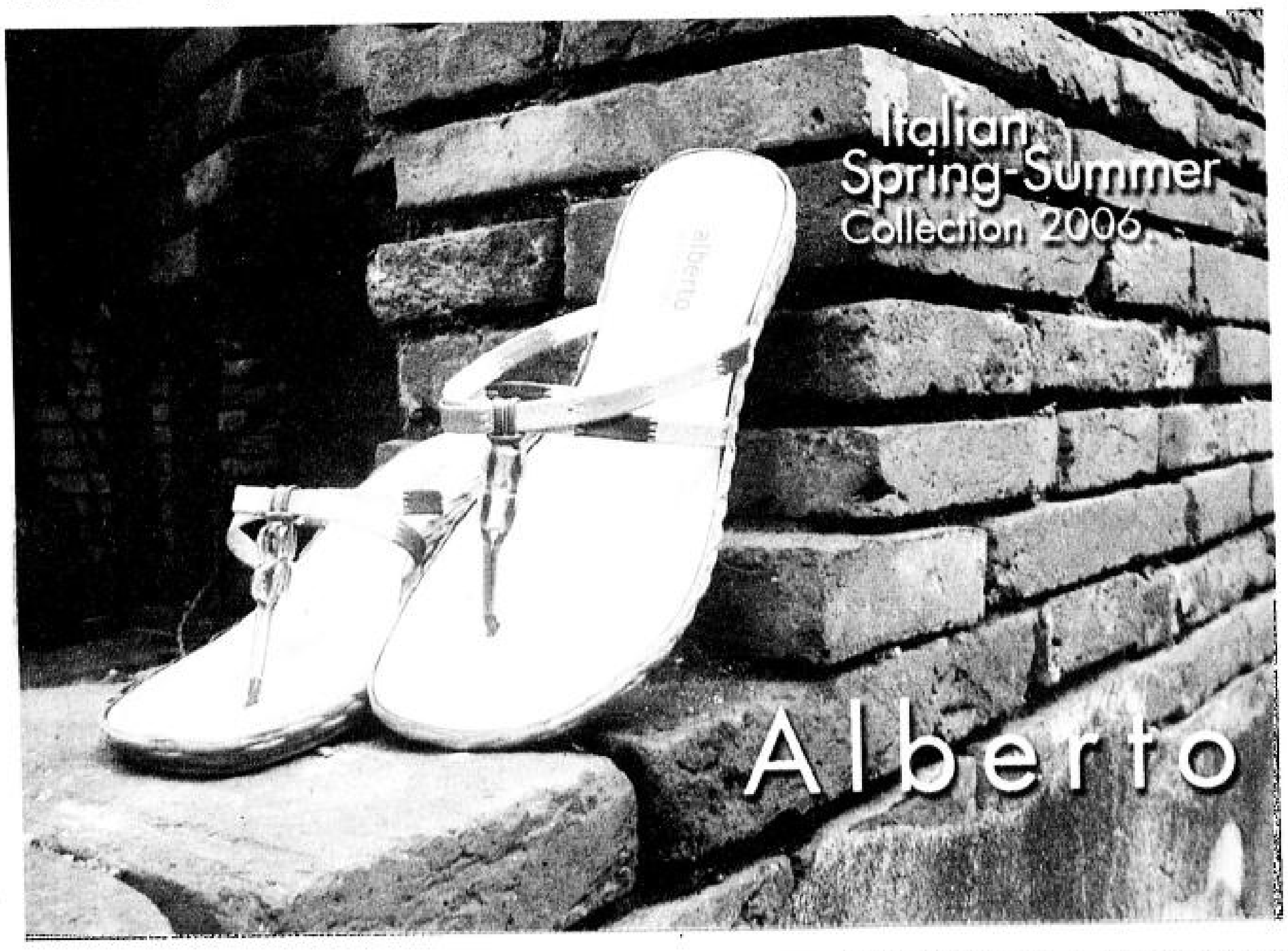
BRIGHT-PINK lipstick is a definite head-turner this summer.

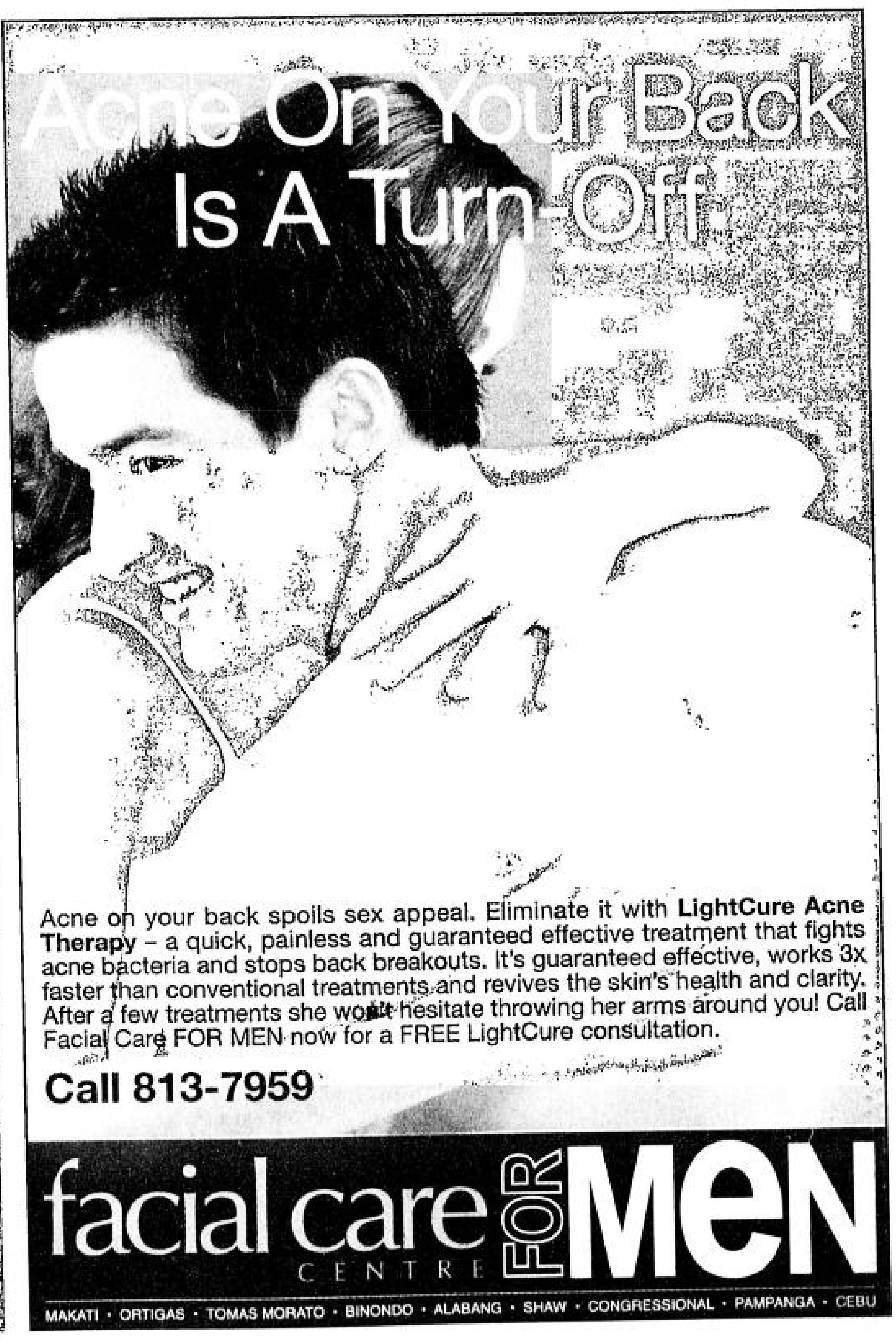
PHOTOGRAPH: DARREN TIESTE MAKEUP: CHECHEL JOSON MODEL: CAROLINE FOR METRO MAGAZINE MARCH ISSUE

Preparing to go to the prom?

Check out the BEAUTY SALONS classification in the

DPC YELLOW PAGES





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AWARD-WINNING actor Albert Martinez, Timex's Murli Menon and Van Heusen's Ashutosh Goyal

HERBERT Sy, SM Supermarkets head; Henry Sy, taipan; and Baby Cheng, EVP for SM Appliance, enjoy the high-goal match of the Enrique Zobel Memorial Cup.

MOI with Manila's crème de la crème Janine de Padna, Maripi Muscat, Kat Abad and Johnny Velasquez

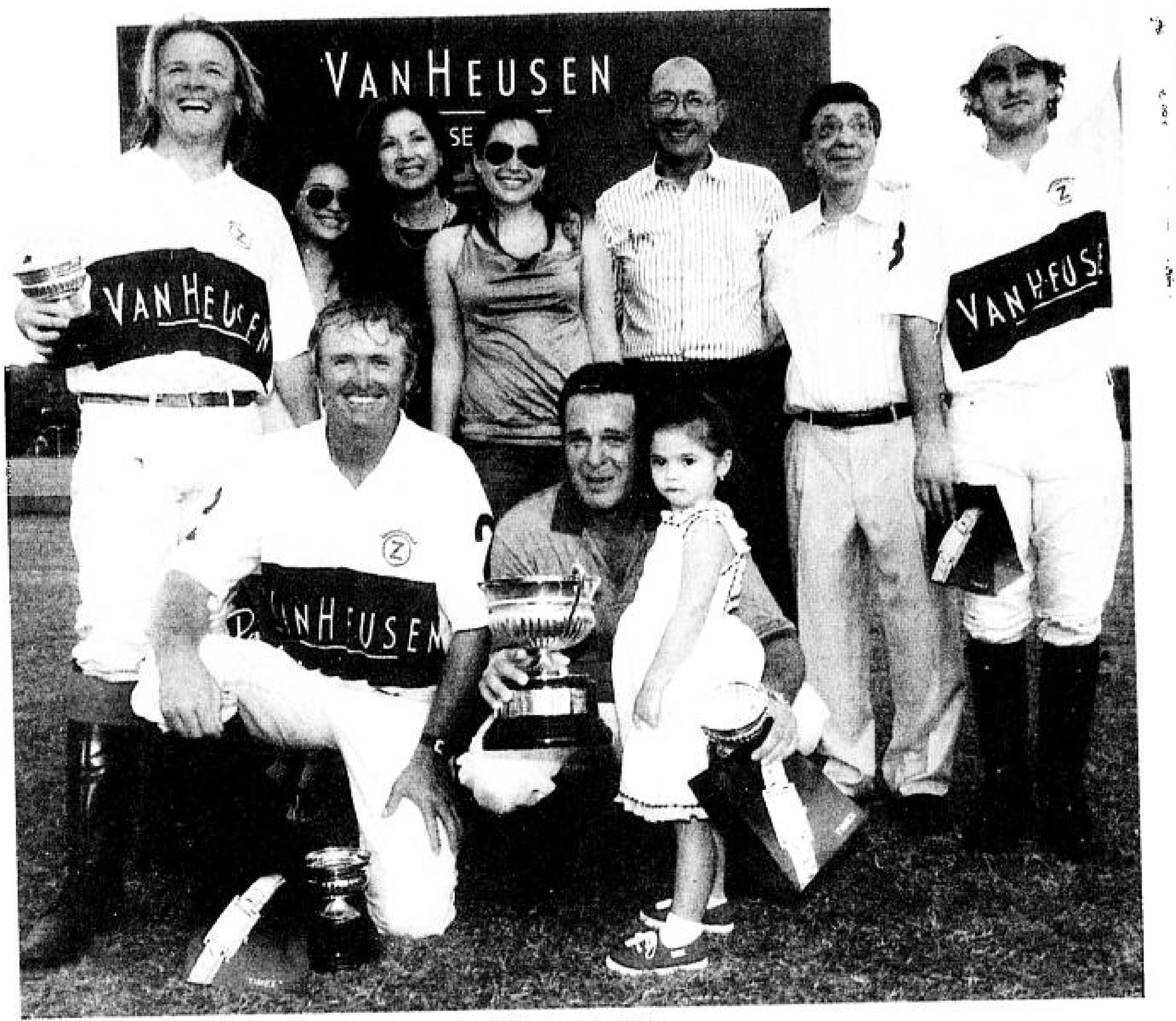
BLI'S vice president Lal Gopwani with Maricris and Iñigo Zobel

KUMIKO Kuroda, wife of Asian Development Bank president Haruhiko Kuroda; Dee Zobel; and Renée Speltz, wife of US Ambassador to ADB Paul Speltz

RAY-BAN'S Joy Gutierrez, MVP David "Pelon" Stirling, and Ray-Ban's secret weapon Gabbie Avanceña

BLI'S chair Bob Mirani

RAY-BAN'S Devi Leaño



WE ARE THE CHAMPS. The winning team with BLI's chair Bob Mirani

A thousand thrills at the Polo Club

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

A FUSION OF FASHION, WORLD-class polo excellence and prestige, dahlings, marked the fab Enrique Zobel Memorial 2006 Polo Cup, superbly presented by Van Heusen, America's No. 1 dress-shirt brand, and Ray-Ban, the world's best-known chic eyewear brand.

Sports enthusiasts and Manille's high-profile movers, shakers and achievers watched the super-exciting competitive polo match at the chic and *tres* exclusive Manila Polo Club, but where else?

The cup was launched by the Zobel *famille* in 2005 to pay tribute to the well-loved late tycoon, Don **Enrique Zobel**, and to celebrate his lifetime's love affair with horses and polo.

The world-class polo hotshots were led by high goalers **Iñigo Zobel** and three international high-ranking players: *el simpatico* **David "Pelon" Stirling** of Uruguay, who was absolutely incredible on the field, even hitting the ball while still in the air; *el guapo* **José Donoso** of Chile; and witty, wealthy British **Mark Field**, who wore Van Heusen polo uniforms of white and blue while battling it out for the goal on the polo field.

Leading the ceremonial salute and throw-in, which signaled the beginning of the awesome high-goal match, were the adorable widow of the late Enrique Zobel, **Dee Zobel**, his granddaughter, gorgeous **Bianca Z.**, and the chair of Madison Retailers Inc., **Bob Mirani**. They were assisted by Manila Polo Club president **Ray Dempsey**.

The low-goal match was played in round-robin among three competing teams. The Whites were the inners with the most number of five goals. The Blues and the Whites tied in number; both earned three.

The high point of that breezy sunny afternoon was the exciting high-goal match, *palanggas*. The game between the Whites (Iñigo Zobel, Mark Field, David Stirling and **Mark Austin**) and the Blues (**Bobby Aguirre, Dino Santos**, José Donoso and **Anthony Garcia**) was fast and super-exhilarating.

Apres six breathless chukkers, the Whites went home with the shining Silver Cup in the final score of 17 to 8. The Most Valuable Player was David Stirling.

Then a fabulous show of slick Porsche sports cars rumbled into the field.

Wow! It was such an awesome sight that, even before the cars parked in a line, the chic-y Polo set applauded like forever.

Cocktails followed.

Hey, it definitely was the best polo game I've attended in eons, *palanggas*.

New home shop

We all have our very own "likes and dislikes" in choosing what's best for our dream home or apartment. Over the years, *palanggas*, there have been all sorts of design "themes"—from modern minimalist to antique Filipino, modern retro, and classic European, and the demand for objects d'art' is still high *natch*.

As Filipinos, our taste has become more sophisticated, in spite of all the gloom and doom around. Hey! We still want to live well and feel good, at least we try, *di bala*?

This is where the one-of-a-kind "Beyond Bamboo" holds fort, *palanggas*. Brilliantly conceptualized by gorgeous sisters **Sheila B. Romero** and **Trisha Bermudez**, Beyond Bamboo will blow your socks off for its fab interior décor items not normally found in bigger retail stores.

Sheila Bermudez-Romero is also a restaurateur. After six fruitful years in the fine-dining business, she gave up the reins on her Azzuro Bistro ownership and decided to take a newfound challenge by forming Branching Out Company Ltd. with Trisha.

Sheila's passion has now expanded into the "art of living."

We didn't only have super time, we also had a fantastic choice of things to perk up parts of the home, dahlings.

Cosmo Manille's hotshots made sure they were there to grab the best of whatever they fancied, while Sheila R. and Trisha B. made sure to help them make up their minds.

Check it out. Beyond Bamboo is at 2/L, 122 Jupiter St., Makati, with tels. 8907680 and 8908191 (telefax) or e-mail bermudeztrisha@yahoo.com. You'll have fun while spending. Now, that's real cool.

Awesome

This year's fantastic "NamiMoto Year 4!" was an awesome weekend, of which much has been written in the pages of this paper.

It was superbly sponsored by the world-class Nami Resort, the popular Motorola, hard-to-beat Smart Infinity, and Seair.

Our group, a potpourri of Manille's business, media and social elite, had an awesome weekend, totally chockfull of fabulous fun and divine brunches, lunches and dinners.

SABRINA Artadi and HSBC CEO Warner Manning

SHELL Canvas top gal Bonnie Chua and Folded and Hung's main man, Ronald Pineda

DIG that close-up look. Attractive Maielle Manimtim and good-looking Felino Neri

BIANCA and Natalia Zobel

MOTOROLA country manager Patrick Aronson, with AJ Joes showing off the Motorola phone he won

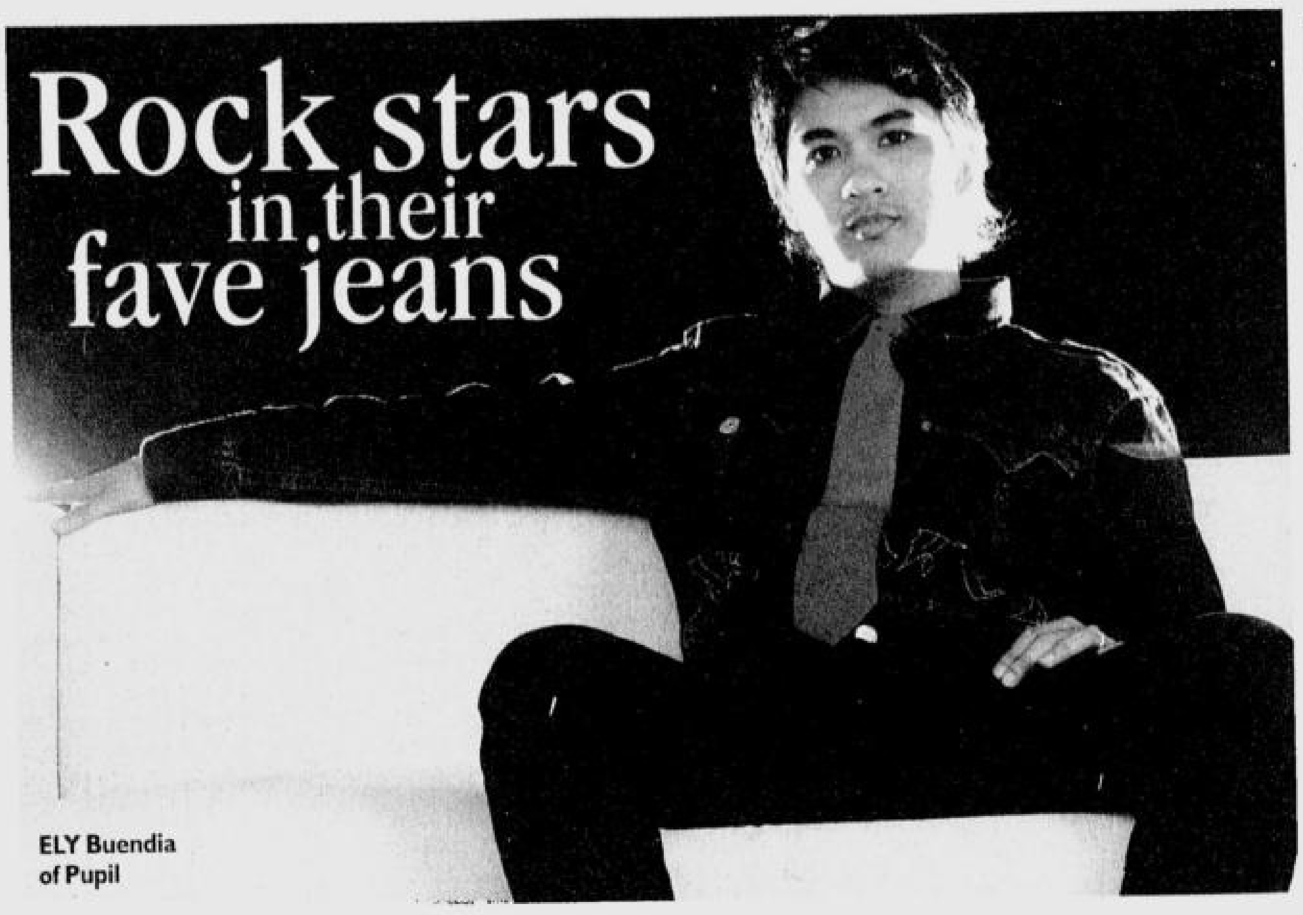
THEY love Beyond Bamboo. Talia Asuncion, gorgeous Mai Castro, good-looking David Kauffman and lady of taste Danette Vizmonte

SUN LIFE'S Lorenzo Tan with Tammy Tanchangco

CAPRICORN birthday celebrants honored at the Shipwreck glam party. Each of us got a Motorola phone as gift!

HOTSHOTS with taste and style. Super PSIDs Leo Almeria; gorgeous Trisha Bermudez, store partner; Irene Marcos-Araneta, another store partner; beautiful Sheila Romero; Maryrose Toda Delgado; and swell, hot couturier Randy Ortiz

Rock stars in their fave jeans



ELY Buendia of Pupil

LEVI'S IS UNDOUBTEDLY A staple in every rock star's closet. Just ask Ely Buendia of Pupil, Champ Lui Pio of Hale, Ebe Dancel of Sugarfree, Aia de Leon of Imago, and Maye Dimaculangan and Rye Sarmiento of 6 Cycle Mind.

The trend-setting clothing brand has a long tradition of supporting the local music scene, and now it's backing up hot musicians for the revolutionary show "MTV Homecoming."

Levi's clads the coolest rockers as they drop by their former schools and neighborhood hangouts to delight fans and friends with scintillating performances.

Watch how Maye and Rye go back to their alma mater, Don Bosco Tarlac, and how Aia has a blast visiting St. Scholastica. Ebe also traces his roots at UP Los Baños, Champ causes a commotion at Marymount, and Ely surprises everyone at University of Perpetual Help.

CHAMP Lui Pio of Hale

IMAGO. Tim Cacho, Myrene Academia, Zach Lucero and Aia de Leon

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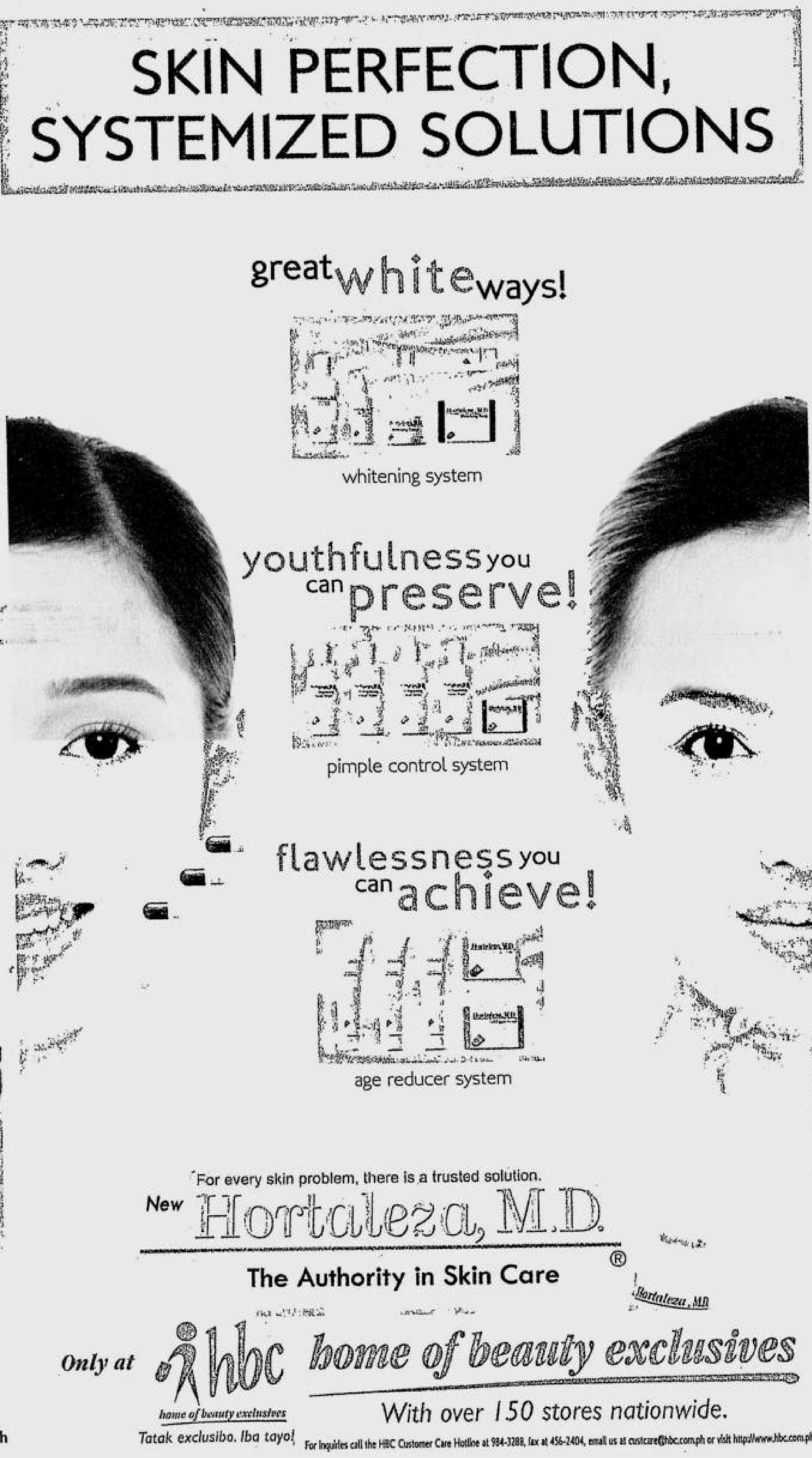
SKIN PERFECTION, SYSTEMIZED SOLUTIONS

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whitening system

youthfulness you can preserve!
pimple control system

flawlessness you can achieve!
age reducer system

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However, with the cutting-edge expertise of Hortaleza, M.D., the once-prohibitively priced Glutathione is now made accessible with new Hortaleza, M.D. Illuminous Whitening Capsule! Enjoy the multi-benefits of Glutathione whitening and anti-ageing, plus Vitamins C and E with Alpha Lipoic Acid. All in one capsule for only ₱39.75 each! That's 53% more affordable than other brands! Get it in packs of 30's and 10's at all HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives Stores nationwide. Now isn't that illuminating news for your skin?

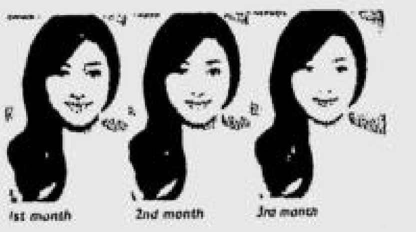

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Exhibit mounted to mark anniversary

THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM MARKED ITS 10TH anniversary by mounting the exhibit "The Enchanted Kingdom: A Decade of Magic" at the Ever Commonwealth and Ever Ortigas.

The Ever Gotesco malls also presented the "Enchanting Fashion on the Catwalk" featuring Ever Kiddie Stars 2005 winners wearing tops and shirts from The Enchanted Kingdom merchandise shop. Eldar, the Wizard, and other Enchanted Kingdom performers did special numbers and had their pictures taken with children in a special meet-and-greet photo session with the aid of Photoline. Ever has branches in Ortigas, Commonwealth, Grand Central, Caloocan and Manila Plaza, Recto.

GOINGS ON

SPECIAL DISCOUNT. Use your Citibank credit card in some of the city's finest spas and enjoy great values until April 30 through Citibank World Privileges (CWP). At Island Foot and Body Wellness on Jupiter Street, Makati, every one-hour body massage gets you a free foot massage, a P300 saving. The Palm Garden Health Spa on Emerald Avenue, Pasig, offers 20-percent off on facials, body wraps and aromatherapy massages. The Suriya Spa in Glorietta 3, InterContinental Hotel or Holiday Inn Galleria Manila offers a 10 percent discount on all services. Offers are available to all Citibank cardholders as part of CWP.

The program features exclusive offers, exceptional services and superior benefits in over 1,000 merchants locally and over 17,000 merchants across the world. Visit www.citibank.com.ph. To apply for a Citibank card, call 4233000.

DISCOUNT PROMO. There's a Double Midnight Madness at Glorietta this weekend. At Converse Glorietta 2, Dwyane Wade limited 2-pack kit is offered at 10 percent off, plus shoppers could charge it to their credit cards at deferred payment scheme without interest. The kit, available in limited supply (only 360 kits available in the Philippines), comes in a beautifully designed box that includes a pair of Wade All Star basketball shoes and a pair of Wade Proleather casual shoes plus a poster/booklet of Dwyane.

SEMINARS. CFS Continental Technology is offering the following seminars: "Developing Excellent Business Communication Skills" (March 24, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); "Basic Bookkeeping" (April 1, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); "Purchasing Management" (March 25, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); "Productivity Enhancement Through 5S" (March 31, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). Call 8232358, 8234825 and 8697960.

GIFT IDEAS. Electronics Boutique offers special graduation gifts for as low as P995, until April 15. Electronics Boutique has branches at Park Square, Ayala Center, Robinsons Galleria, Market! Market! and Alabang Town Center. Call 8990102.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS. Tower Book House offers writing workshops this April for Filipino kids, 8-18 years old. The workshop includes techniques in discovering one's writing style, strengthening one's style and applying this style in various forms of communication. The workshop also tackles essay writing, feature writing, journalism, short story writing, and playwriting. Interested participants may call 8154938, 8156925; or you may visit Windsor Tower, 163 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

LAUNCHING. Vemma, an affiliate of New Vision International, a US-based company, will be launched April 8 at the Legend Villas Hotel in Mandaluyong City. The US$1-billion company with over one million customers worldwide is now in the Philippines with its free membership program.

AIGS Marketing Corp., headed by Joey Aranal as president and CEO, is the Philippines' exclusive distributor of Vemma and New Vision nutritional wellness products. Vemma offers products such as mangosteen, aloe vera and green tea, among others. Visit www.myvemma.com/aigsmc. Free VCDs on Vemma products are available at the AIGS Marketing Corp. head office: Suite 1408 Jollibee Plaza Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City (tel. 6873016, 6873018, 0918-7931863; e-mail joey@aigsph.com or promo@aigsph.com).

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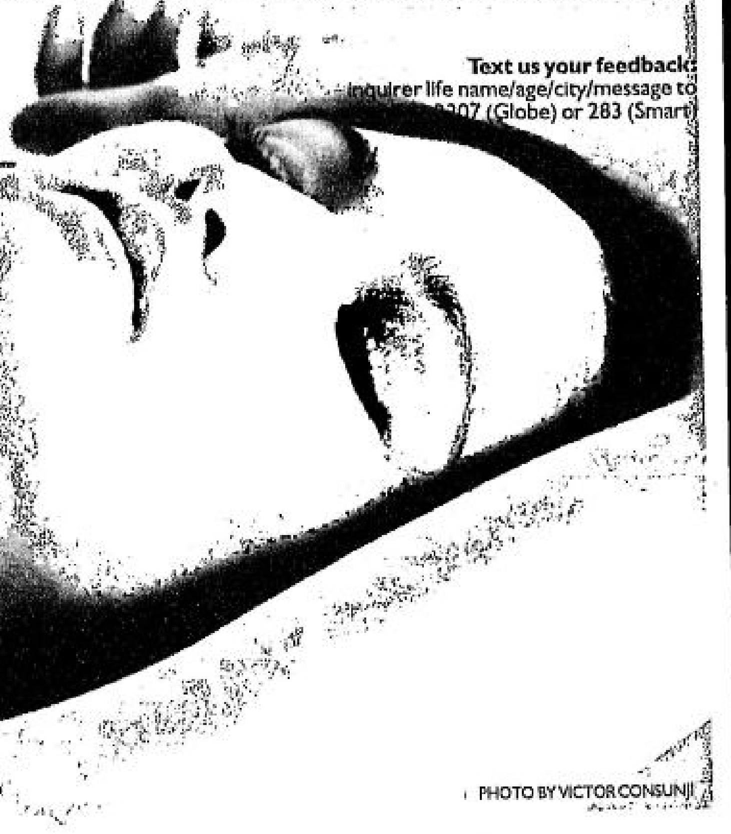
Contributing editor
Ria Francisco-Prieto

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

Ray of light

Story on page D2



Shed some
light on
your skin

“I think a positive outlook despite stress” —Anna Palabyab

PHOTO BY VICTOR CONSUNJI

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“A good workout helps me feel good and I find that if I feel good, the inner and outer glow just happen on their own.”
-Anna Cu-Unjieng

PHOTO BY XANDER ANGELES

Ray of light

By Ria Francisco

I WOULD RATHER BE TAN THAN fair. I used to frequent the beach a lot and I would bask in the sun with my SPF-15 in hand. After slathering myself with protection, I would wait around 15 minutes, then spread on some oil.

Viola! I would have a really great tan.

But Shanghai changed things for me. I was sent there with a couple of other beauty editors and was given a skin test. We were tested for skin moisture, elasticity and fine lines. When it came to moisture, my skin age was four years minus my real age; I was so happy and proud. Most of the girls didn't “score” that well. My moisturizing ritual had paid off!

Next was elasticity. Three years younger… Yay!

Then fine lines. Three years' advance! Yikes!

I then pictured how I would look like in a couple of years, and I got scared. The girl doing the test was also surprised with the result since most of the time your skin age results are close to one another.

What happened? Too much time under the sun.

Those are years I cannot have back, but the good thing is that wrinkling can be prevented. I will not only use SPF everyday, but I will avoid the sun as much as I can. Truth is, when I see girls who are tanned, I only see burnt skin and girls who will look five years older due to excessive sun.

If I want a tan, I buy a bottle of Clarins self-tanner, and I know I'd get the fab color without having to compromise aging my skin.

I am a believer in loving the skin color one has been endowed with. I am not really a big fan of whitening products. So when I go to launches that has to do with skin whitening, I must confess I don't pay much attention.

Luckily, one boring afternoon, I read the Lancôme press kit of Blanc Expert NeuroWhite and learned that whitening actually means illuminating.

And, hey, doesn't every girl want to have glowing skin?

Living in today's fast-moving modern society, women demand quick results and speedy experiences. Who hasn't complained for standing in line to a slow cinema booth or snapped at a sluggish waiter? We want it now and we want it fast!

The cosmetic gods are definitely listening to us as French cosmetics giant Lancôme launches a quick and efficient skincare product, Blanc Expert NeuroWhite. The product promises transparent luminous skin in only three days!

After three days of using the Spot Eraser, the skin immediately brightens and glows. After only four weeks, brown spots, including stubborn ones, are removed, mak-

---

Wake up and smell the flowers

Lighten up and go for tropical fragrances

By Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

OFF WITH THE BOLERO AND cardigan, kiss goodbye to woolen slacks and heavy jeans. Give a big welcome to cool, crisp whites and breezy linens. The sun is searing hot nowadays so fashionistas are starting to peel off layers of clothing.

As a result, fragrance-choices are also getting lighter and fresher. If clothing styles change every season to adapt to the weather, it makes sense for fragrances to evolve as well.

So, say adieu to heady, spicy scents that give the feeling of warmth and are, therefore, more suited for cooler climates. It's time to open your arms (and your purse strings) to lighter, fruity and floral fragrances that evoke images of halcyon days in an exotic tropical island.

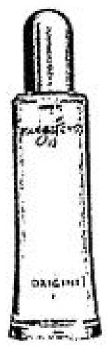
As early as winter in other parts of the world, fragrance companies had started introducing scents that are best suited for tropical climates. Some even went as far as introducing new perfume lines especially concocted for “cruise season,” that period that falls smack in the middle of winter, when almost everyone runs off to some exotic travel destination.

What makes these scents so special anyway? For one thing, they are made much lighter than the usual cloying, heavy perfumes. They are not only paler in color, often times appearing as clean and clear as refreshing water, they are also subtler in scent, usually containing a combination of floral or fruity elements. What's more, they are packaged in pretty bottles that look great on any dressing table.

Choice of scent is undoubtedly a very subjective matter but this season, it really is time to lighten up. Try out some of these sensational scents and find the fragrance that's right for you.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

PLEASURES Exotic by Estée Lauder



SPRING Fever by Origins

HAPPY in Bloom by Clinique (Available for a limited time starting April)

The nose knows

tips! tips! tips!

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL FACTS THAT YOU SHOULD know when choosing fragrance.

AAS

❋ Try on just one product at a time so you can avoid olfactory overload. Dab or spray it on your pulse points (the inner wrist is best) and let it rest for a while, as the scent will still change according to your body chemistry.

❋ Perfumes are composed of three notes, namely, top, middle and bottom notes. The top notes evaporate the fastest (about 5-10 minutes) and is the first scent you whiff as you apply the perfume. Middle notes emerge about 15 minutes after application and can last up to an hour or more, while bottom notes are the heavier ingredients and last for several hours. Basically, all three notes, though distinct, blend together to create a unique scent.

❋ The difference between perfume, Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette and Eau de Cologne lies in the concentration of oils in the fragrance. The highest concentration is in perfume, followed by Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette and Cologne. Perfumes are stronger and last longer while Eau de Parfums and Eau de Toilettes or colognes are lighter. You might want to reserve the use of perfume for evening affairs while using the lighter versions for work or casual events.

❋ Spritz or dab perfume on your pulse points like the inner wrist, behind your ears, on your neck and even behind your knees. To make it last longer, try layering your fragrance. Fragrance companies offer products, like bath gels or lotions, which you can use to accentuate your scent. A light spray on the hair can also last all day. For a subtler scent, spray the perfume directly above and in front of you and simply walk into the mist as it showers down.

❋ Be careful not to get perfume stains on clothing and beware of perfume overload, as this is a definite no-no that is akin to a fashion victim piling on all the trends. Your perfume should complement, not overpower, your style and personality.

General cleansing inside and out

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

ACHIEVING A FLAT STOMACH AND LOSING more weight motivated me to get into a fasting program. Of course, it is the Lenten season, and I figured I might as well do something connected with fasting.

What I didn't want was zero intake that might make me faint from starvation, ulcer and vitamin deficiencies. If I was going to diet, I was going the healthy route.

My research showed that Nature's Secret Ultimate Fasting Cleanse (P4,350 for a month' s supply) was the best way to go about it. It's a five-day, five-part maximum fasting and detoxifying program that cleansed the colon, liver and blood. It provides nutrition and ensures healthy elimination of toxins from the body.

Toxin buildup and enlarged colon are major causes of cancer. As some relatives had died of cancer, the program was attractive to me.

It turns out there are major benefits to fasting a few times a year. It cleanses the kidneys, liver and colon, which is needed especially for those who are into the high-protein and low-carbohydrate diets like Atkin's or South Beach. It flushes out toxins. It also provides clearer vision and cleaner breath.

Fasting also results in renewed energy—I had a feeling of lightness, was more alert and could move faster. It also leads to loss of excess weight and water. (I lost four pounds after five days of fasting.)

Fasting eases the bowels and enhances the immune system, thus promoting faster healing. It likewise purifies the blood.

The bonus: my skin felt as silky as a Hermès scarf and so much clearer. The red veins on my eyes also subsided and I also felt cooler so the summer heat did not torture me as your body temperature drops due to fasting. I even slept without air-con!

In place of your regular three meals a day, you are given detailed instructions on what combination and dosage to take.

It surprised me that as this was all I was taking, I would use the bathroom almost immediately after each “mealtime.” By the end of it all, I felt so clean and my washboard abs were to-die-for. I wish my thighs and butt joined the bandwagon as eagerly.

The purposes of the five-day program are colon-cleansing (it supports bowel function), fiber fortification (you feel fuller), digestive health and excretion of toxins, liver maintenance and repair, appetite control, and better nutrition.

Nature's Secret Ultimate Fasting Cleanse is available at all Health Express outlets. Call 8929364.

It is suggested that we do the five-day, five-part program every three months or every change of season in the US or Europe.

Strengthening immunity

Another supplement for strengthening the immune system that I tried recently was Immunocal, which tastes like nonfat powdered milk.

My motivation for taking this for 30 days straight was to achieve a whiter and more even-toned skin faster than Glutathione tablets. These come in powdered packets of bonded cysteine.

Cysteine is one of the main components of Glutathione and ingesting it in this form raises its levels in the body so it is actually more effective than taking just tablets.

In tablet form, it has difficulty penetrating the digestive system so we only get to absorb a small part compared to the delivery system of Immunocal.

Glutathione is essential to us because it is an antioxidant that eats up free radicals that cause our cells to break down, making us age faster and preventing us from getting our skin's full beauty potential.

It also boosts the immune system and helps fend off sickness. It lets the body and skin repair efficiently.

Glutathione also kills the toxins that have accumulated over the years, like chemicals, mercury, lead and pesticides.

Within 30 days of taking Immunocal, my skin's texture has become silky and more even, especially on the stubborn darker areas like the back, arms and legs. The effect is faster than the tablets, which take three months to show obvious results.

Note: I stopped the tablets for two months before taking Immunocal to really monitor the progress. One may take tablets and solution at the same time to speed up the process.

Call 8442939 or visit any Belo clinic or Forever Flawless outlet.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com

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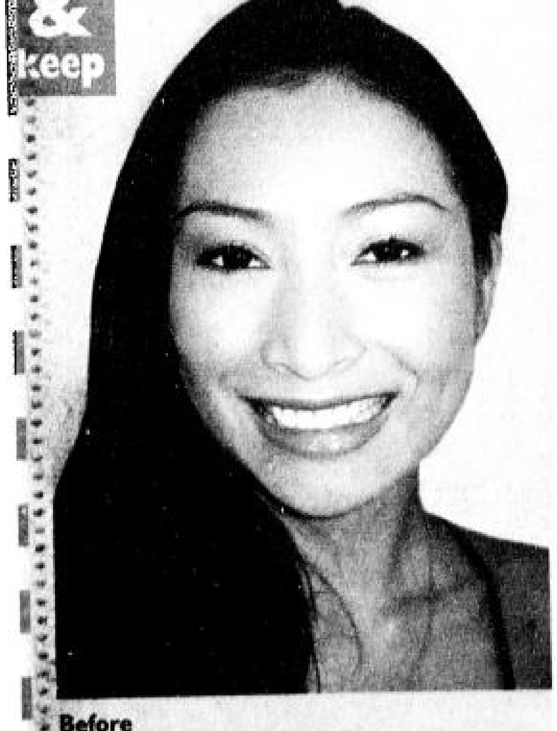
cut & keep

How to fake a tan

Too much sun-tanning may damage your skin



Before

SUMMER IS HERE AND IT is time to have that sun-kissed look. Most of us head for the beach and lie under the sun. Others go for the tanning salons and voila! they have an instant tan!

I have nothing against tanned skin, but I am not comfortable with the process. Do you know that the No. 1 cause of skin aging, skin damage and skin cancer is the sun?

Actually, anything that emits light causes skin damage. Our computers, televisions or even the lights in our house have ultraviolet rays that may damage the skin.

So what can and should we do about it? Simple. Wear sunblock every day.

Even when you are not going to the beach, wear SPF 30; it is the best protection. There are plenty of facial sunblocks available now in the market. They are very sheer and lightweight to the face. They are also intended for everyday use.

I personally use Shu Uemura XTR 50 and Lancôme's UV Protect in 50. I myself avoid the sun like the plague because I get burned easily. I am sure I am not the only who shares this sentiment.

But I envy people who have nice, glowing brown skin. So what should I do to have that same effect without frying myself?

Makeup! All you need is a good bronzer and you're going to be like those sun goddesses!

Base. Use a foundation that is two shades darker than your regular one. Or try a bronzer stick. Make sure your face is clean, dry and matte. The bronzer will stick to oily or damp areas and streak making your face look dirty.

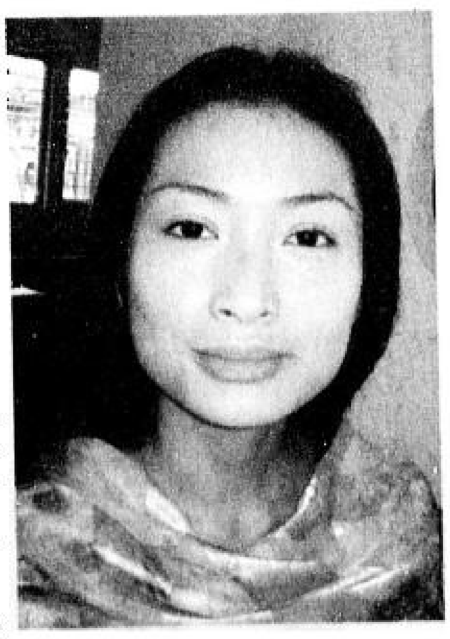
You can also apply blush before the bronzer. This would give the illusion of a rosy, sexy, slightly sun-kissed look.

For a dewy look, dab a sheer gel bronzer over your blush.

If you want that sun-kissed look, apply the bronzer with a big fluffy brush. Concentrate on the areas where the sun naturally hit your face.

Lips. Stick to the nudes or just dab a little gloss on the center of your lips.

TEXT AND MAKEUP BY BARBI CHAN



After

ing way for clearer skin! This is definitely for the woman who doesn't want a lot of fuss and wants visible results fast.

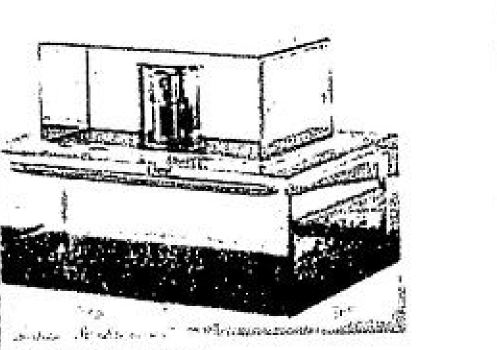
Blanc Expert NeuroWhite is a complete skincare line from Lancôme, encompassing the whole routine, from face wash to toner, moisturizer, eye cream, and night cream.

The star product is the Spot Eraser, which reduces brown spots by 95 percent. What's more, the product is the first in the market to target both the environmental (UV, pollution) and emotional causes of melanin production. The more stressed you are, the more melanin is produced, thus making skin dull. Blanc Expert NeuroWhite targets the hormone which causes the dulling and reduces the highly pigmented cells by 43 percent. The product is definitely perfect for the woman of today.

If you are reading this article, you are a modern woman. So this product is something you should consider. Of course, without ditching the SPF and daily moisturizer.

> *"Skincare, diet and exercise are essential in having a glow but I notice it more when I make a good decision based on good intention."*
>
> -Mariko Jacinto

PHOTO BY RAYMOND ISAAC



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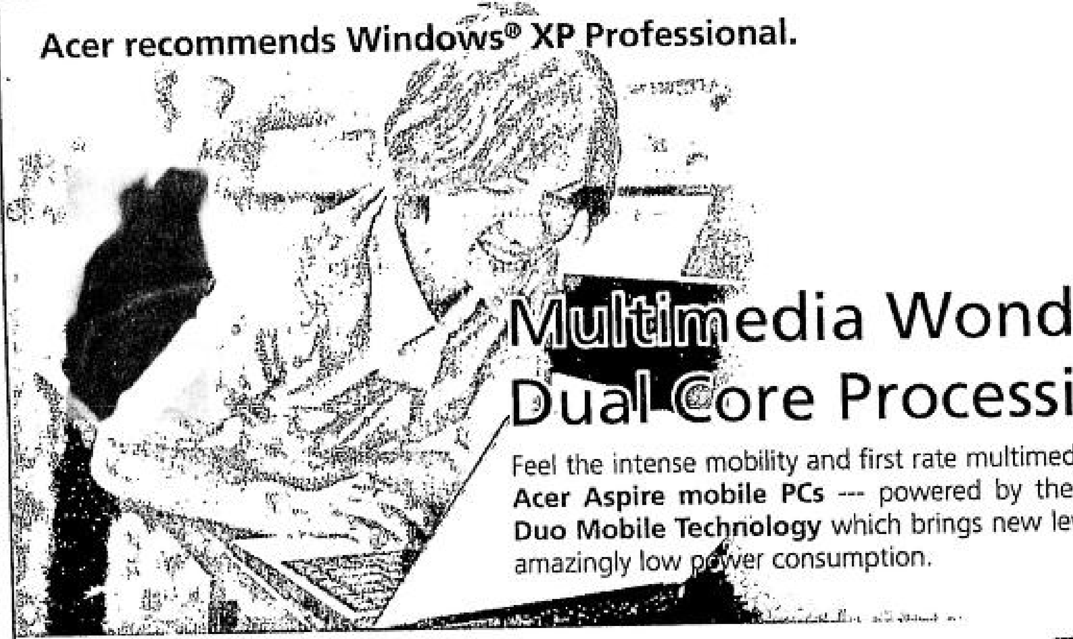

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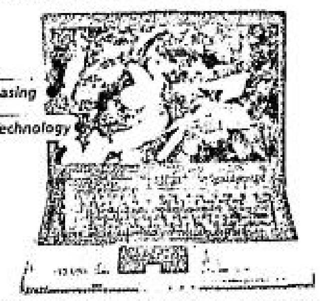

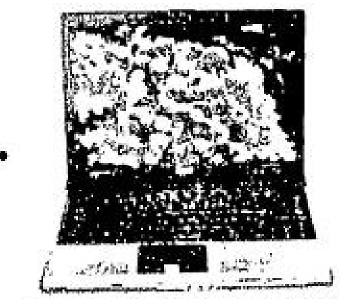

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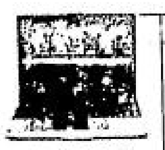

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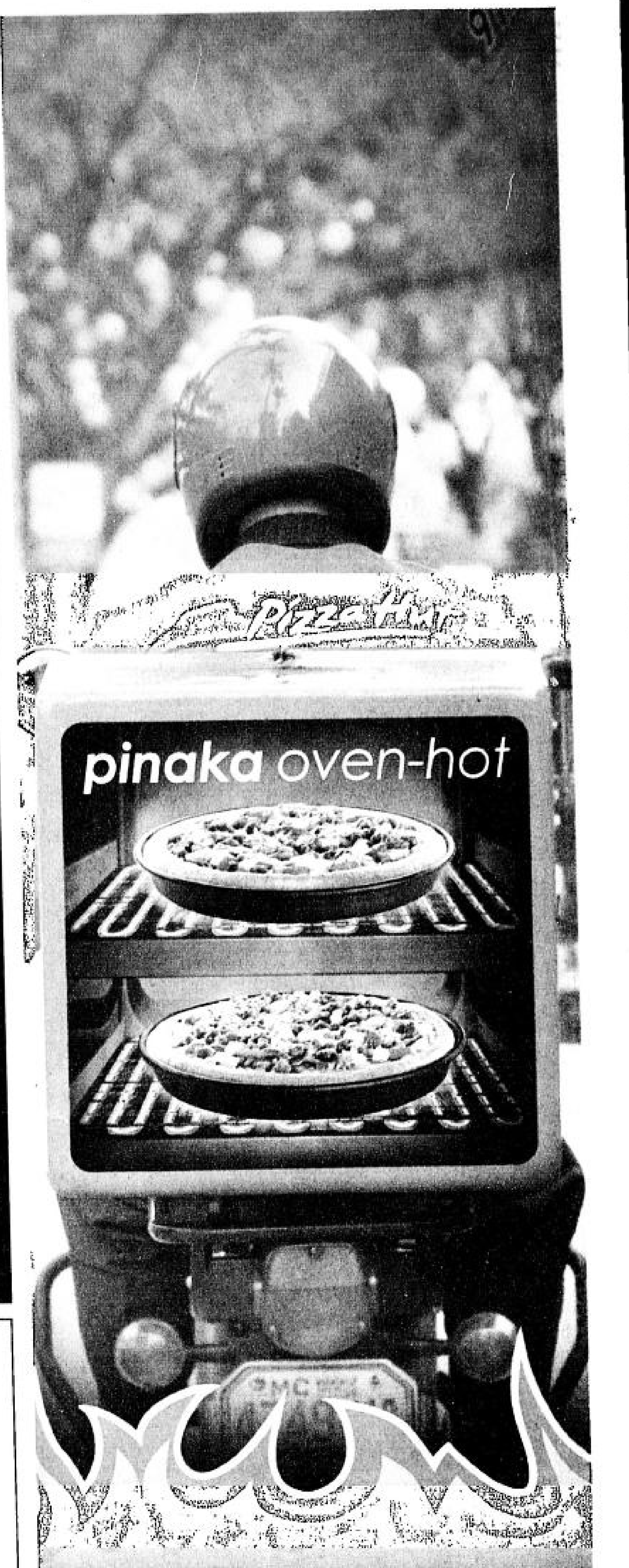

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BPI Express Credit ushers n the sizzling summer months with the most awaited shopping event of the year, the BPI Installment Madness, from March 15 to April 2, 2006 at the Glorietta Ayala Center.

Now on its 37th staging, the BPI Installment Madness is famous for providing BPI Express credit cardholders the best value for their credit card with the greatest merchandising mix.

It features top brand home appliances, the most elegant furniture and home furnishings, indoor sports equipment, the hottest cellphones, and digital and electronic products. And the best thing about it is that credit cardholders can choose from an option of charging and converting their transactions on installment through the Special Installment Plan (S.I.P.) facility of their BPI Express Credit Cards with really low interest rates! It gives them up to 24 months to pay for their purchases at affordable installment rates.

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The 2mad about' emall promo gives BPI Express Credit cardholders the chance to win a Nissan Patrol 4x4. All they have to do is make a minimum P1,000 single receipt regular purchase or a P3,000 single receipt S.I.P. purchase at Glorietta.

BPI Express Credit's Make It Happen promo, meanwhile, gives cardholders the chance to win a trip to a trip to the United State's popular theme parks, a Mediterranean Cruise, a 2006 Porsche Boxster and a 2006 Audi A4 Avant. All they have to do is make a minimum P1,000 single receipt regular purchase or a P3,000 single receipt S.I.P. purchase at any BPI accredited merchant nationwide.

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Prize for PETRON - BPI MasterCard: 2006 Audi A4 Avant with free 1 year comprehensive car insurance
Prize for BPI Edge or Mini-Edge: 2006 Porsche Boxster with free 1 year comprehensive car insurance

To join, simply charge a minimum purchase of ₱1,000 to your BPI Express Credit Card.

Every ₱1,000 purchase entitles you to one raffle entry. The more entries, the more chances to win.

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*To apply for a BPI Express Credit Card, visit any BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank branch or Express Banking Center near you or call 89-100 or log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com.

*Annual membership fee for new customers waived for the first year.
*Approved applications during the promo period will also earn raffle entries.
*Actual unit may vary from photo.

BPI Express Credit's Make It Happen promotion is from November 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006.
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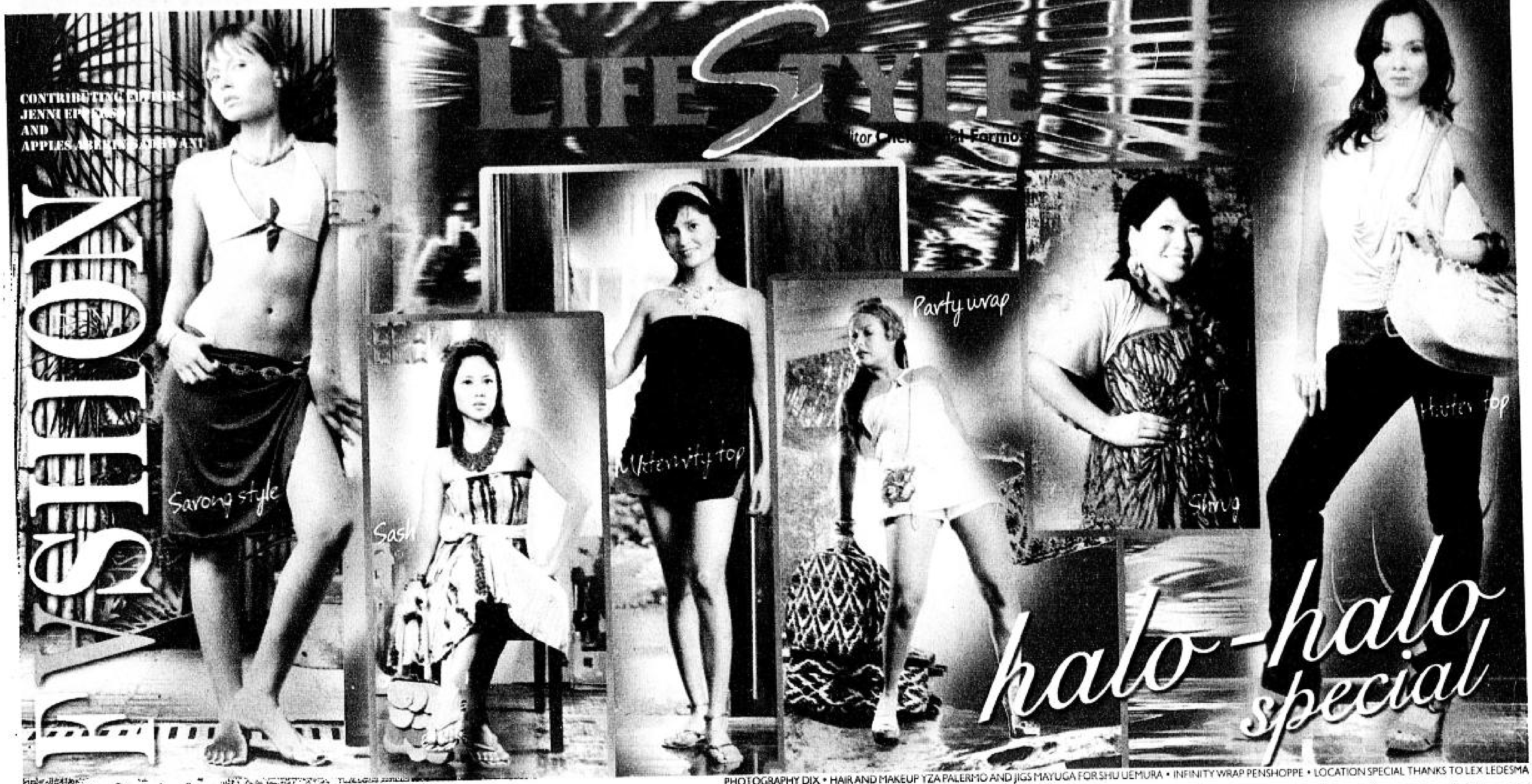
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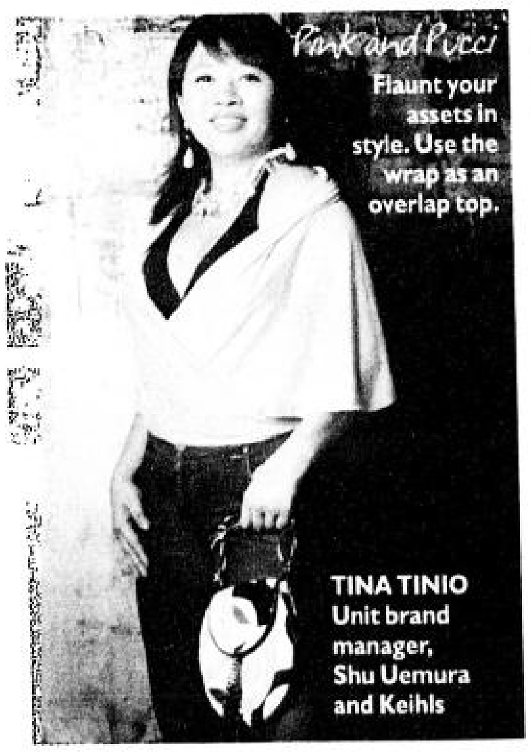
To infinity and beyond!

For P349, you can come up with at least 12 ways to wear the Infinity Wrap from Penshoppe. That's P29 per look!

Jenni Epperson

IT'S A WARP-speed life these days, and we're all struggling to keep up with the pace. We're multitasking at work. Our mobile phones can do just about anything (I'm waiting for one that can do the dishes, or sort my closet!). And the more "all-in-one" the gadget or accessory, the better!

TO INFINITY/ E2



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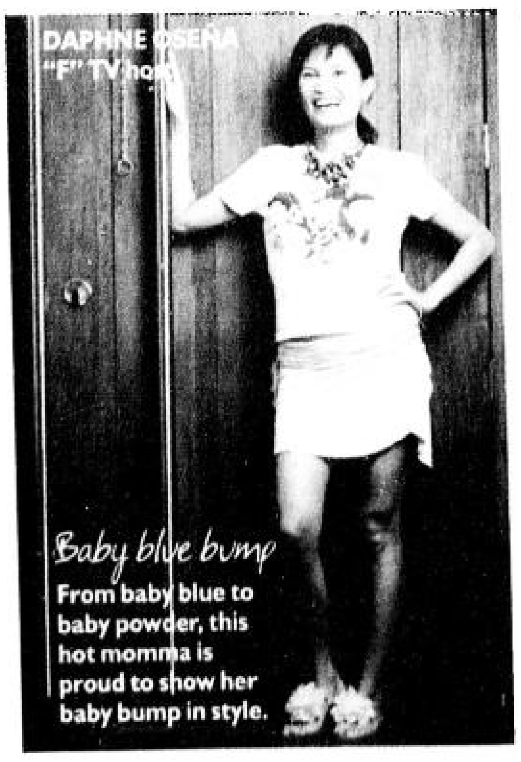
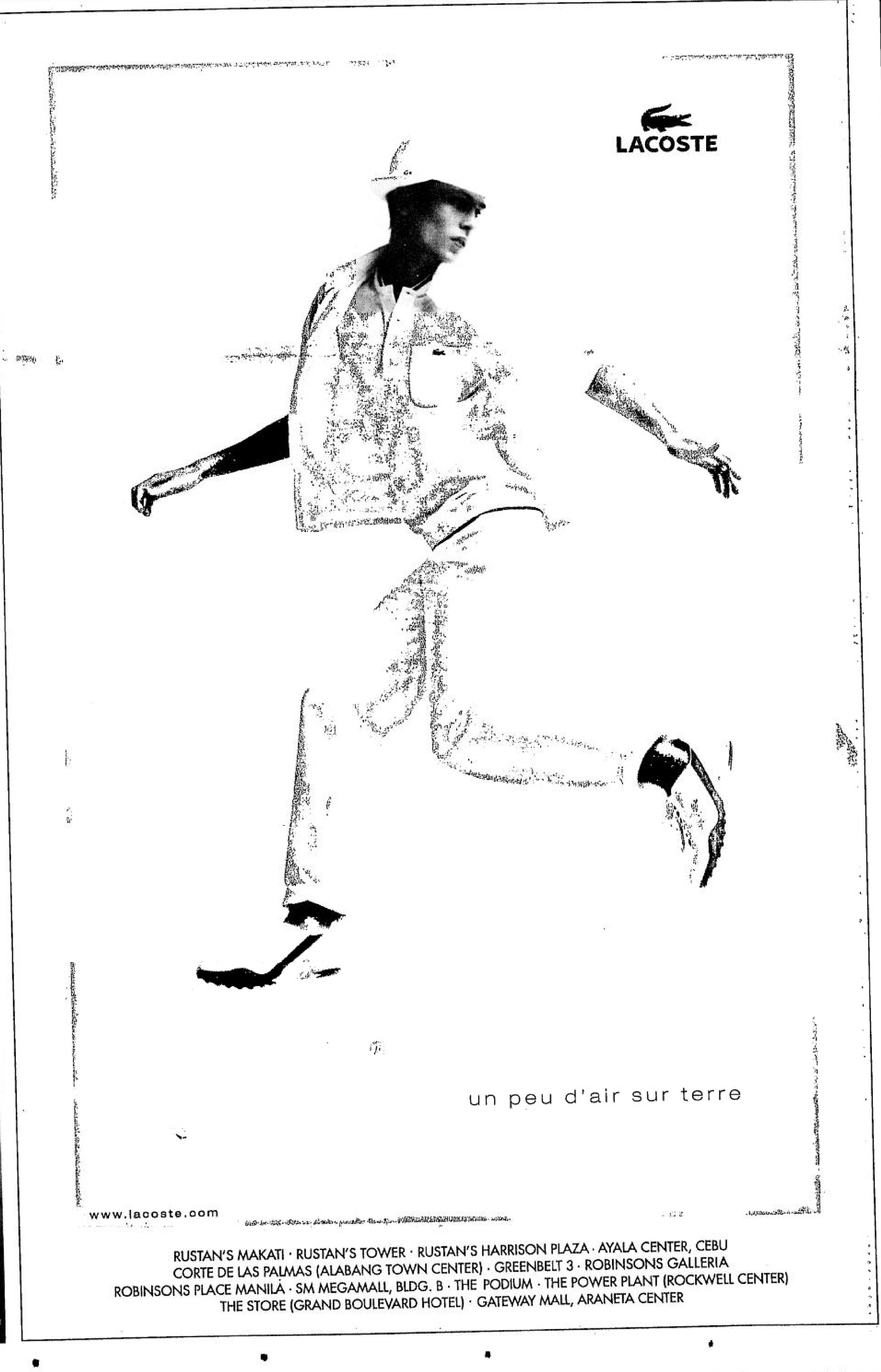


DAPHNE OSEÑA
"F" TV host

Baby blue bump
From baby blue to baby powder, this hot momma is proud to show her baby bump in style.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DRENCHED down there

WET and wild

SOAKED to the skin

Splash dance

Ino Caluza's jeans line under his very own Viktor label is not 'couture,' but it very well may be

By Alex Y. Vergara

TWO YEARS AFTER COMING up with his first pair of made-to-order jeans, Victorino "Ino" Caluza still feels a bit queasy whenever people describe his creations as "couture."

Apart from its trademark leather trimmings on the back pockets, V-shaped belt loops and occasional hint of Swarovski beads, Caluza's jeans line under his very own Viktor (tel. 6880357). label is bereft of major embellishments. Of course, something as de rigueur as top-stitching doesn't count.

"People always associate couture with decorations," he says. "I'm more concerned with the fit. But if you consider made-to-order stuff couture, then my jeans probably are."

The former art director of an in-flight magazine may balk at putting too much trimmings on his jeans, but he's proud of the fact that not a few of his clients went home happy after slipping into the perfect-fitting pair.

Caluza's love affair with jeans and his search for the ideal but affordable pair led him to design his own. He even designed a suit made entirely of denim when doing so was unheard of in the Philippines.

"Friends started noticing what I was wearing and, before I knew it, I was already taking their orders," he says. "To cater to a growing clientele, I will be opening my first mall outlet on April 1 at the fourth level of the Podium."

At the end of the day, he adds, finding the right pair of jeans has nothing to do with its brand, price and, yes, embellishments. It has everything to do with fit. This explains why a growing number of clients are willing to brave the traffic and spend precious time fitting.

"It doesn't matter if a pair costs a mere P250," adds Caluza. "If the fit is perfect, chances are you're going to wear it more often than the more expensive but ill-fitting imported pair."

Figure flaws

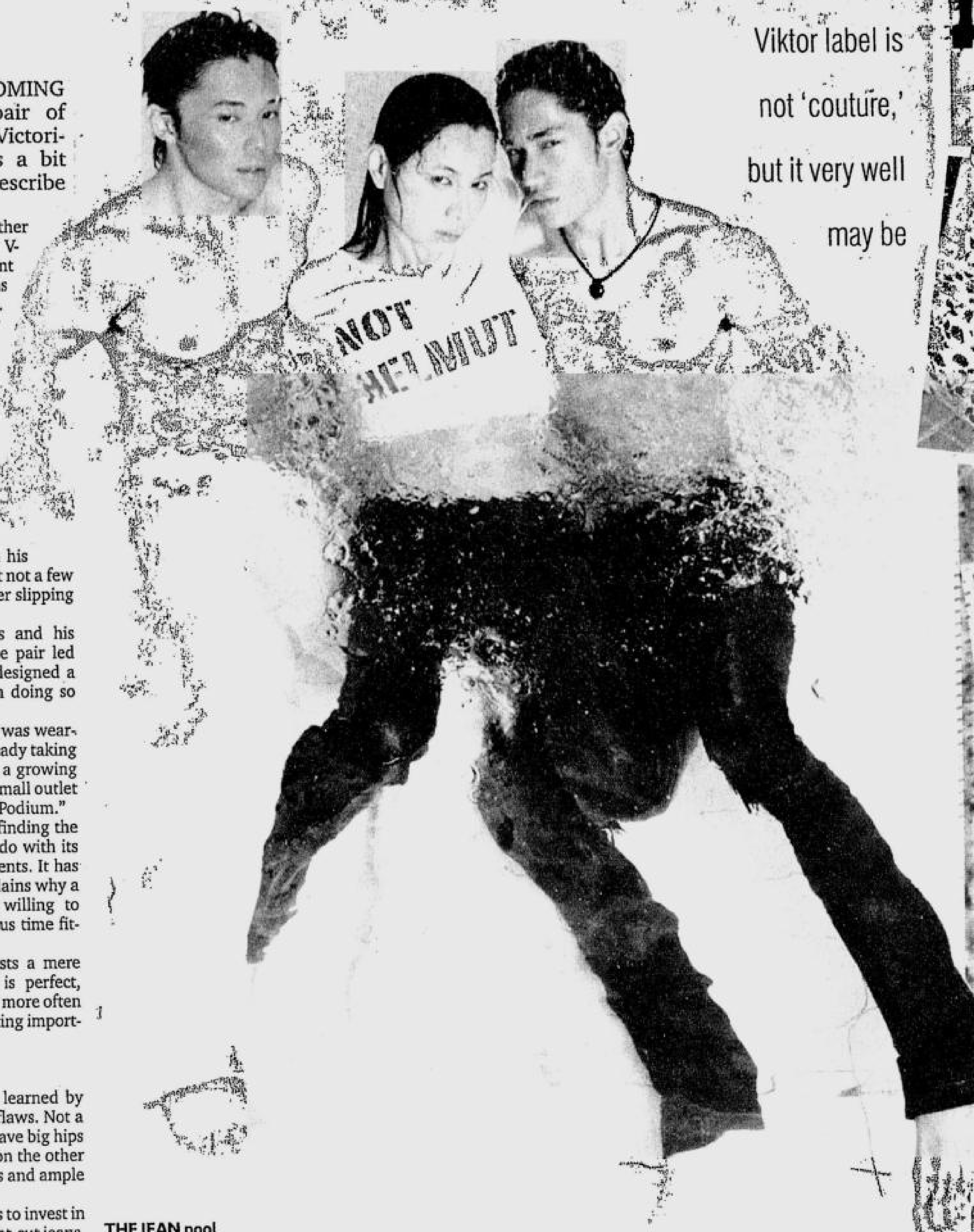
In fact, Caluza seems to have learned by heart the typical Filipino's figure flaws. Not a few young women, for instance, have big hips and small waistlines. Most guys, on the other hand, have short legs, flat behinds and ample waistlines.

He advises women with big hips to invest in a good pair or two of flattering boot-cut jeans. But the short guy is better off sticking to straight legs, as the boot-cut silhouette can only make him look smaller.

"Men with less-than-ample behinds should look for the right low-rise jeans," Caluza adds.

Addressing a person's specific figure is just half of it. Before Caluza sits down and takes a client's measurements, he first conducts a so-called lifestyle assessment.

"I usually recommend a style of jeans based primarily on what a client does," he says. "It also helps to know if he or she is a day or night person. If the client loves to party, then he or she would need a more unique or striking pair."



THE JEAN pool

Caluza may have limited his offerings to three design series—V (P3,700-P4,000 per pair), VP (P4,900) and the premium VX (P5,000-P5,500)—but each presents numerous "permutations" that are limited only by the user's imagination and chutzpah.

For starters, the designer has a wide range of materials in various colors, washes, weights and grades at his disposal. After his first year in the business, he added cotton twill, canvas and even camouflage—as in military-inspired jigsaw print—to his extensive inventory of denim fabrics.

"Rambo" meets "Brokeback Mountain?" Couture jeans has never looked this radical.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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WACK WACK POOL

To infinity and beyond!

Green-minded jean-ius

A fashion flip flop with one-shoulder top

ANNE ARCENAS-GONZALEZ
VP for marketing, Havaianas

From page E1

Even the realm of fashion has joined the fray. First, there was the infinity dress. Remember those infomercials? You sat in your PJs, devouring your favorite ice cream while hypnotized by the announcer's voice ("...and that's not all!") as the model popped up in one version after the other (insert "ooh... ahh" here).

Then there was designer Rajo Laurel's infinity top that made waves among the stylish set. Made of jersey in nearly every color of the rainbow, it was photographed at practically every product launch.

And now, the Infinity Wrap of Penshoppe.

Tie it or twist it, fold it or fasten it, drape it or dress it up. Sash it or wrap it around whichever part of your body that strikes your fancy.

This is the thrill of discovery, fashionista-style: the obsession of working a single piece of clothing into X + forever ways is not so much the result of a wardrobe drought. It's more about the fun of discovering what new style you can concoct. Then again, it could be lack of closet or suitcase space—which I very much doubt!

We asked six hardcore fashionistas to have their way with the Infinity Wrap, and we're thrilled to our toes to report that these ladies came up with more than a week's worth of with-it looks on and off the beach.

For P349, you can come up, at the very least, with 12 ways to wear the Infinity Wrap. That's P29 per look! Talk about value for your vavavoom level.

So don't be afraid to experiment to your heart's content. Being stylish isn't about having mountains of clothes to choose from, it's about having infinite creativity with what you already have.

E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

Zip in style
Dance to the bandana beat.

Brown beat
Exotic in halter-top style

ASTRUD CRISOLOGO
Owner, Casa Amarilla

CAT JUAN
Co-founder of Planet zips.com, beauty writer

Three-way tie
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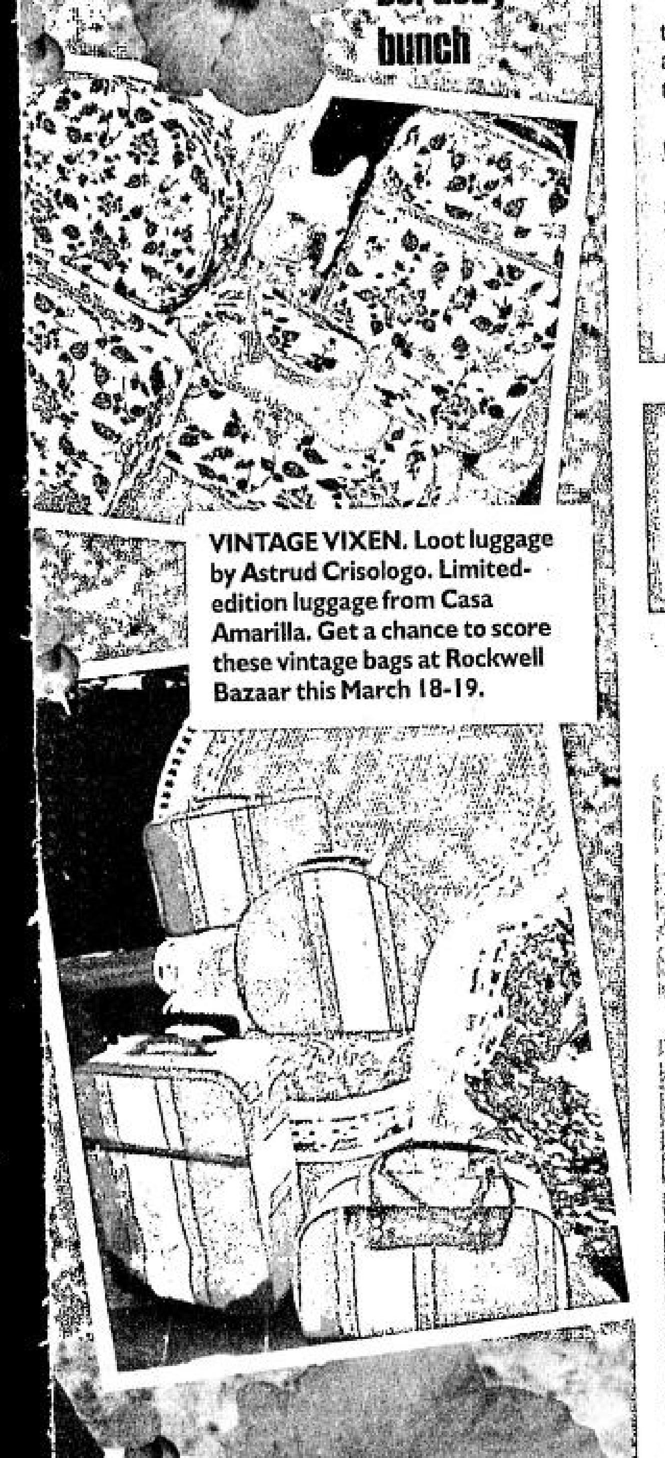
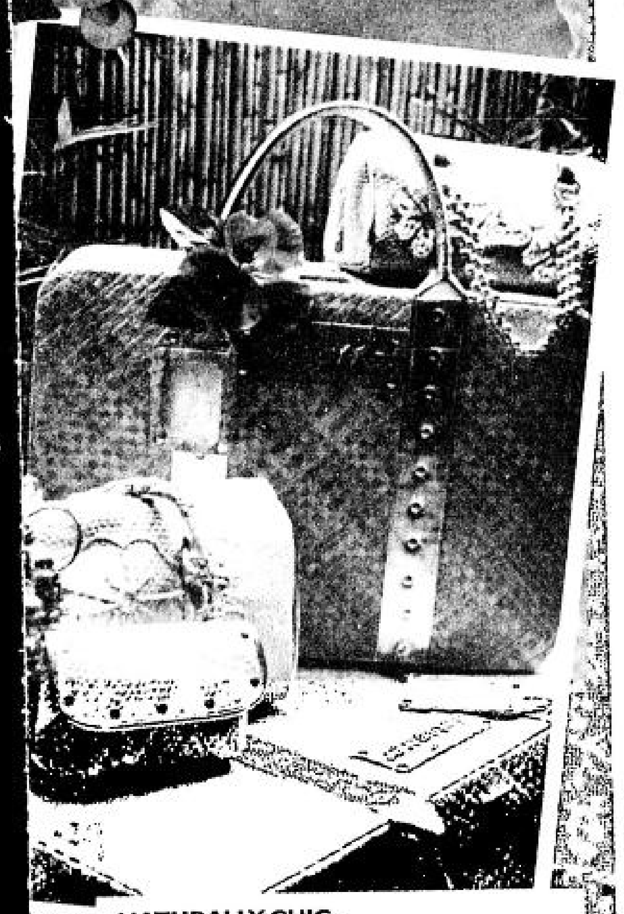
AMINA ARANAZ-ALUNAN
Aranaz bag designer, model

brag board

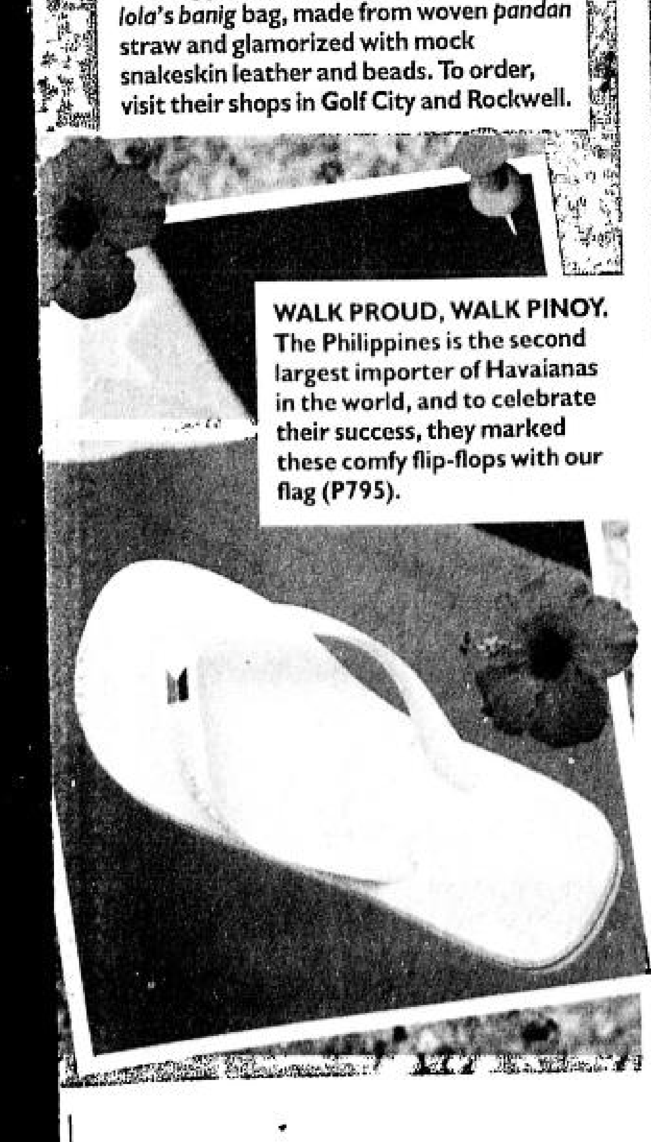
Go beach-bound with summer sizzling treats made for style-stars of the Boracay bunch



VINTAGE VIXEN. Loot luggage by Astrud Crisologo. Limited-edition luggage from Casa Amarilla. Get a chance to score these vintage bags at Rockwell Bazaar this March 18-19.



NATURALLY CHIC.
This luggage from Aranaz is far from your *lola's banig* bag, made from woven *pandan* straw and glamorized with mock snakeskin leather and beads. To order, visit their shops in Golf City and Rockwell.



WALK PROUD, WALK PINOY. The Philippines is the second largest importer of Havaianas in the world, and to celebrate their success, they marked these comfy flip-flops with our flag (P795).

FASHION FLASH

Villainess lands lead role

SHE'S THE QUINTESSENTIAL *maldita* of contemporary Philippine cinema, the love-to-hate villainess of the silver screen. So it should be of little surprise that actress Cherie Gil has been chosen as the new face of the clothing and lifestyle brand Maldita.

Gil, of course, has always been lauded by the fashion press for her elegance and sartorial taste, and is always at the top of local entertainment's best-dressed lists.

But, naysayers may ask, isn't she a bit mature to be endorsing a label like Maldita?

"We never saw her age as a problem," stresses Eric Teng, owner of Maldita. "In fact, we never considered anyone else to endorse our brand... Cherie's an icon for all ages. She's very appealing. She's *kikay*, *kalog*..."

Like her immortal movie lines, the fortysomething Gil is a classic beauty, adds Teng, and is in no way a "second-rate, trying hard copycat." The actress "gave her own inputs [for the promotional photo shoot]... She's very easy to work with."

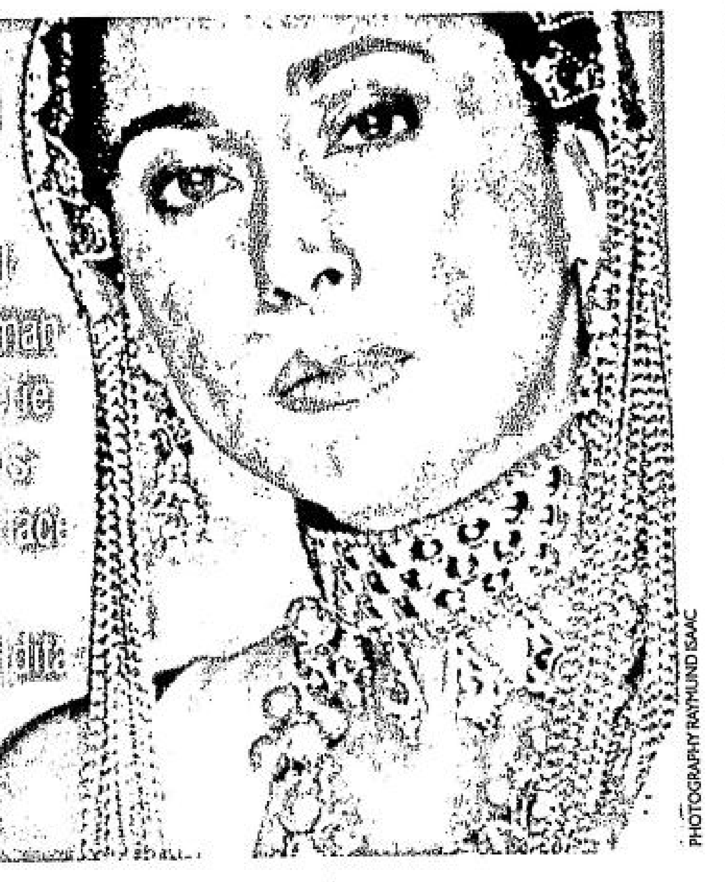
Maldita, contrary to what some may think, says Teng, doesn't only cater to young women, but to women of all ages—women who have their own sense of drama, who aren't afraid to break away from social molds, who are the stars of their own show. Just like Gil.

"You see, age isn't really an issue anymore," notes Teng. "Look at the women of 'Sex and the City,' 'Desperate Housewives.' Cherie is just like your friend's sexy mom. She's cool, she's the jean-wearing kind..."

As if to prove that Maldita is for women of all ages, the owner announces that the twentysomething designer Kate Torralba will launch her first ready-to-wear collection for the label next month.

As they say, *abangan*...

Cheche V. Moral



PHOTOGRAPHY RAYMUND ISAAC

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- Araneta Square, Caloocan City
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- Eastwood City, Libis
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- Berkeley Square, Commonwealth
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0434, Series of 2006

See flyers for details.

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  Buy 1 Take 1 cinema tickets on the last full show screening at Glorietta 1 & 4 on March 17 & 18, 2006 (except for the movie "V for Vendetta").
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